



The Gothic World

Edited by
Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

THE GOTHIC WORLD



The Gothic World offers an extensive overview of the popular field of the Gothic, from the eighteenth century through to the present day. Encompassing the literary, it also extends critical debate in exciting new directions, including film, politics, fashion, architecture, fine art, music, technology and cyberculture. Structured around the principles of time, space and practice, and including a detailed general introduction, the five sections of the volume consider:

- Gothic histories
- Gothic spaces
- Gothic readers and writers
- Gothic spectacle
- Contemporary impulses.

The Gothic World seeks to account for the Gothic as a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional force, as a style, an aesthetic experience and a mode of cultural expression that traverses genres, forms, media, disciplines and national boundaries: a “Gothic World,” indeed.

Glennis Byron is Professor of English at the University of Stirling, Scotland. With Dale Townshend, she co-runs the MLitt in The Gothic Imagination. She was the principal investigator for the AHRC-funded Global Gothic network.

Dale Townshend is Senior Lecturer in Gothic and Romantic Literature at the University of Stirling, Scotland, where he co-runs, with Glennis Byron, the MLitt in The Gothic Imagination.

THE ROUTLEDGE WORLDS

THE REFORMATION WORLD

Edited by Andrew Pettegree

THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

Edited by Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson

THE BYZANTINE WORLD

Edited by Paul Stephenson

THE VIKING WORLD

Edited by Stefan Brink in collaboration with Neil Price

THE BABYLONIAN WORLD

Edited by Gwendolyn Leick

THE EGYPTIAN WORLD

Edited by Toby Wilkinson

THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Edited by Andrew Rippin

THE WORLD OF POMPEII

Edited by John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss

THE RENAISSANCE WORLD

Edited by John Jeffries Martin

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD

Edited by Philip F. Esler

THE GREEK WORLD

Edited by Anton Powell

THE ROMAN WORLD

Edited by John Wachter

THE HINDU WORLD

Edited by Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby

THE WORLD OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Edited by Gordon Morris Bakken

THE ELIZABETHAN WORLD

Edited by Susan Doran and Norman Jones

THE OTTOMAN WORLD

Edited by Christine Woodhead

THE VICTORIAN WORLD

Edited by Martin Hewitt

Forthcoming:

THE MORMON WORLD

Edited by Carl Mosser and Richard Sherlock

THE SUMERIAN WORLD

Edited by Harriet Crawford

This page intentionally left blank

THE GOTHIC WORLD



Edited by

Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend

First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2014 Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend for selection and editorial matter; individual contributions the contributors

The right of Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The gothic world / edited by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Gothic revival (Literature) I. Byron, Glennis, 1955—editor of compilation. II. Townshend, Dale, editor of compilation.

PN3435.G678 2014

809.3'876—dc23

2013009581

ISBN: 978-0-415-63744-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-49001-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

In Memoriam
Marilyn Patricia Michaud
1959–2012

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS



<i>List of figures</i>	xii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxii
Introduction	xxiv
 PART I: GOTHIC HISTORIES	 I
1 The politics of Gothic historiography, 1660–1800 <i>Sean Silver</i>	3
2 Gothic antiquarianism in the eighteenth century <i>Rosemary Sweet</i>	15
3 Gothic and the New American Republic, 1770–1800 <i>Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock</i>	27
4 Gothic and the Celtic fringe, 1750–1850 <i>James Kelly</i>	38
5 British Gothic nationhood, 1760–1830 <i>Justin D. Edwards</i>	51
6 Gothic colonies, 1850–1920 <i>Roger Luckhurst</i>	62
7 History, trauma and the Gothic in contemporary western fictions <i>Jerrold E. Hogle</i>	72
 PART II: GOTHIC SPACES	 83
8 Gothic and the architectural imagination, 1740–1840 <i>Nicole Reynolds</i>	85

9	Gothic geography, 1760–1830 <i>Benjamin A. Brabon</i>	98
10	Gothic and the Victorian home <i>Tamara Wagner</i>	110
11	American Gothic and the environment, 1800–present <i>Matthew Wynn Sivils</i>	121
12	Gothic cities and suburbs, 1880–present <i>Sara Wasson</i>	132
13	Gothic in cyberspace <i>Bryan Alexander</i>	143
 PART III: GOTHIC READERS AND WRITERS		 157
14	Gothic and the publishing world, 1780–1820 <i>Anthony Mandal</i>	159
15	Gothic and the history of reading, 1764–1830 <i>Katie Halsey</i>	172
16	Gothic adaptation, 1764–1830 <i>Diane Long Hoeveler</i>	185
17	Gothic romance, 1760–1830 <i>Sue Chaplin</i>	199
18	Gothic poetry, 1700–1900 <i>David Punter</i>	210
19	Gothic translation: France, 1760–1830 <i>Angela Wright</i>	221
20	Gothic translation: Germany, 1760–1830 <i>Barry Murnane</i>	231
21	Gothic and the child reader, 1764–1850 <i>M.O. Grenby</i>	243
22	Gothic and the child reader, 1850–present <i>Chloe Buckley</i>	254
23	Gothic sensations, 1850–1880 <i>Franz J. Potter</i>	264
24	Young adults and the contemporary Gothic <i>Hannah Priest</i>	274
25	The earliest parodies of Gothic literature <i>Douglass H. Thomson</i>	284
26	Figuring the author in modern Gothic writing <i>Neil McRobert</i>	297

27	Gothic and the question of theory, 1900–present <i>Scott Brewster</i>	308
PART IV: GOTHIC SPECTACLE		321
28	Gothic and eighteenth-century visual art <i>Martin Myrone</i>	323
29	Gothic visuality in the nineteenth century <i>Elizabeth McCarthy</i>	341
30	Gothic theater, 1765–present <i>Diego Saglia</i>	354
31	Ghosts, monsters and spirits, 1840–1900 <i>Alexandra Warwick</i>	366
32	Gothic horror film from <i>The Haunted Castle</i> (1896) to <i>Psycho</i> (1960) <i>James Morgart</i>	376
33	Gothic horror film, 1960–present <i>Xavier Aldana Reyes</i>	388
34	Southeast Asian Gothic cinema <i>Colette Balmain</i>	399
35	Defining a Gothic aesthetic in modern and contemporary visual art <i>Gilda Williams</i>	412
PART V: CONTEMPORARY IMPULSES		427
36	Sonic Gothic <i>Isabella van Elferen</i>	429
37	Gothic lifestyle <i>Catherine Spooner</i>	441
38	Gothic and survival horror videogames <i>Ewan Kirkland</i>	454
39	Rewriting the canon in contemporary Gothic <i>Joanne Watkiss</i>	465
40	Gothic tourism <i>Emma McEvoy</i>	476
41	Gothic on the small screen <i>Brigid Cherry</i>	487
42	Post-millennial monsters: monstrosity-no-more <i>Fred Botting</i>	498
	<i>Index</i>	510

LIST OF FIGURES



2.1	“History Preserving the Monuments of Antiquity.” Frontispiece to Volume I of Francis Grose, <i>Antiquities of England and Wales</i> , 4 vols (1772–76)	17
4.1	Frontispiece to volume I of Thomas Leland’s <i>Longsword, Earl of Salisbury</i> (London: printed for W. Johnston, 1762)	42
8.1	“North Front of Strawberry Hill,” from Horace Walpole, <i>A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole</i> (Twickenham: Strawberry Hill, 1784)	90
8.2	Plate 11, “View of the West, & North Fronts,” from John Rutter, <i>Delineations of Fonthill and its Abbey</i> (London: Charles Knight, 1823)	94
9.1	<i>Landscape with Tobias and the Angel</i> , Salvator Rosa. © The National Gallery, London 2013	104
14.1	Production of new fiction, 1780–1820	164
14.2	Authorship of new fiction by gender, 1780–1829	165
15.1	“ <i>Tales of wonder!</i> ” by James Gillray; published by Hannah Humphrey. Hand-coloured etching and aquatint, published 1 February 1802. Purchased, 1947. © National Portrait Gallery, London	175
16.1	Frontispiece to <i>Father Innocent</i> (London: Thomas Tegg, 1803). Reproduced by courtesy of the Sadleir-Black Collection. © University of Virginia Library	187
16.2	Frontispiece to <i>The Nun: Or, Memoirs of Angelique: An Interesting Tale</i> (London: Tegg and Castleman, 1803). Reproduced by permission of the Princeton University Library	189
25.1	The cover illustration of a Paperback Library Gothic edition of <i>Northanger Abbey</i> from 1965	286
25.2	Henry William Bunbury. Illustration for “The Wolf-King or Little Red-Riding-Hood,” <i>Tales of Terror</i> (London: Bulmer and J. Bell, 1801). Reproduced by courtesy of the Sadleir-Black Collection. © University of Virginia Library	287

- 28.1 Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97). *A Philosopher by Lamplight* (exhibited 1769). Oil on canvas, 128.2 × 101.6 cm. © Derby Museum and Art Gallery 324
- 28.2 Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740–1812). *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard* (1790). Oil on canvas, 86.3 × 68.5 cm. © Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection 327
- 28.3 Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). *Percival Delivering Belisane from the Enchantment of Urma* (exhibited 1783). Oil on canvas 99.1 × 125.7 cm. © Tate, London 2013 330
- 28.4 Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). *The Nightmare* (exhibited 1782). Photo © 2013 Detroit Institute of Arts. Image © Founders Society. Purchased with funds from Mr and Mrs Bert L. Smokler and Mr and Mrs Lawrence A. Fleischman 331
- 28.5 Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778). *The Carceri*: Plate 14, second edition: *The Gothic Arch* (1761). Etching with engraving 41.2 × 54.8 cm Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri*, Plate XI, an etching. © The Trustees of the British Museum 333
- 28.6 James Gillray (1756–1815). *Un Petir Souper, à la Parisienne* (published 1792). Handcoloured etching 25 × 35.2 cm. © The British Museum 334
- 28.7 Francisco Goya (1746–1828). *Los Caprichos*, Plate 8: “Hooded Figures Carrying off Woman” from a bound album of first edition impressions (1799). Etching, aquatint and drypoint 21.5 × 15 cm. © The British Museum 335
- 28.8 William Blake (1757–1827). *The Ghost of a Flea* (c. 1819–20). Tempera heightened with gold on mahogany panel 21.4 × 16.2 cm. © Tate, London 2013 336
- 29.1 “The Dead Devoured by the Living,” in volume II of *The Terrific Register: Or, Record of Crimes, Judgments, Providences, and Calamities* (London: Sherwood, Jones, and Company, 1825) 344
- 29.2 Mary Byfield, “Socivizca roasting two Turkish prisoners,” in volume II of *The Terrific Register: Or, Record of Crimes, Judgments, Providences, and Calamities* (London: Sherwood, Jones, and Company, 1825) 345
- 29.3 Harry Clarke, “Morella,” in Edgar Allan Poe’s *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1919) 347
- 29.4 *Mr. T.P. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in the Character of the Monster in the Dramatic Romance of Frankenstein*, painted by Wageman. Drawn on stone by N. Whittock, 1923 348
- 29.5 Praxinoscope theatre. © Sheila Terry/Science Photo Library 351
- 30.1 Honoré Daumier, *At the Theater (The Melodrama)* (c. 1860–64). Oil on canvas 97.5 × 90.4 cm. © Bayerische Staatsgemädesammlungen, Neue Pinakothek, Munich 356
- 30.2 Illustration to Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort*. From “De Monfort: A Tragedy in Five Acts,” in *The British Theatre: Or, A Collection of Plays*, Vol. 24, 2nd ed. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816 359

— *List of figures* —

32.1	John Barrymore as Mr Hyde, in John S. Robertson's <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> (1920)	379
32.2	Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's <i>Psycho</i> (1960)	385
33.1	Vampire Erotics: Ingrid Pitt as Carmilla in the explicit <i>The Vampire Lovers</i> (1970)	393
33.2	Body Gothic: Cenobite Pinhead (Doug Bradley) and friends in Clive Barker's <i>Hellraiser</i> (1987)	397
34.1	Kim Ji-woon's <i>Memories</i> (2002) on the cover of the Asia Extreme release of <i>Three</i>	403
34.2	Photographing Loneliness in Peter Chan's <i>Going Home</i> (2002)	408
35.1	Louise Bourgeois, <i>CELL VII</i> , 1998. Mixed media, 207 × 220.9 × 210.8 cm, Flick Collection, Zurich. Photo: Peter Bellamy. © Louise Bourgeois Trust / DACS, London / VAGA, New York 2013	413
35.2	Nathaniel Mellors, <i>Giantbum</i> , 2009. Installation view showing animatronics at Tate Britain, 2009. Photograph © Nathaniel Mellors. Courtesy of the artist; Matt's Gallery, London; MONITOR, Rome; and Galerie Diana Stigter, Amsterdam	414
35.3	Andy Warhol, <i>Electric Chair</i> (1964). © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARS, NY and DACS, London 2009	422
37.1	Gothic Flower Arranging, <i>Paint it Black: A Guide to Gothic Homemaking</i> (2005)	442
37.2	Gothic Fireplace, <i>Grand Designs</i> , Series 6 episode 4, Channel 4, February 6, 2008	449

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



Xavier Aldana Reyes is Research Fellow in Gothic Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. He has published on horror, the Gothic, affect, body theory and gender. He is currently working on the forthcoming monographs, *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film* (University of Wales Press) and *Spanish Gothic: National Identity, Collaboration and Cultural Adaptation* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Bryan Alexander is the senior fellow for the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education. He holds a PhD from the University of Michigan, and has taught Gothic literature at Centenary College of Louisiana. He is the author of *The New Digital Storytelling* (Praeger, 2011).

Colette Balmain is an independent scholar, writer and film critic as well as a lecturer in film and media studies. Her area of research is horror cinema and Gothic studies, with a particular interest in Southeast and East Asian Cinema and Cultures. Her first book, *Introduction to Japanese Horror Film*, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2008, a second edition of which will appear in 2013/2014. She is currently working on two books, one on Korean Horror Cinema (2013) and the other on East Asian Gothic cinema (2014). She is also the editor of Intellect's *Directory of World Cinema: South Korea* (2013).

Fred Botting is Professor of English Literature and executive member of London Graduate School at Kingston University. He has written extensively on Gothic and horror fiction and film, contemporary writing and literary theory.

Benjamin A. Brabon is Senior Lecturer in English Literature and SOLSTICE Learning and Teaching Fellow at Edge Hill University. His book publications include *Postfeminist Gothic: Critical Interventions in Contemporary Culture* (Palgrave, 2007) and *Gothic Cartography: A Literary Geography of Haunting* (Palgrave, 2013).

Scott Brewster is Reader in English and Irish literature at the University of Stirling. He is author of *Lyric* (Routledge, 2009) and co-editor, with Michael Parker, of *Irish Literature Since 1990: Diverse Voices* (Manchester University Press, 2009). Previous publications include the co-edited *Inhuman Reflections: Thinking the Limits of the Human* (2000). He has published widely on the Gothic, Irish writing

and psychoanalysis, and is currently working on a study of Gothic, tourism and travel.

Chloe Buckley is a PhD student at Lancaster University, researching contemporary children's Gothic and Weird fiction. Her research focuses particularly on the marketing of Gothic to children, the Gothic series and the relationship of psycho-analytical narratives to children's Gothic.

Glennis Byron is Professor of English Studies at the University of Stirling. She is the author of *Gothic* (with David Punter, 2004) and the editor of *Dracula: New Casebook* (1999), *Spectral Readings: Towards a Gothic Geography* (with David Punter, 1999). Recent publications include essays on various contemporary Gothic texts, including Malaysian horror fiction, Zafón's *La sombra del viento*, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, Cronin's *The Passage*, and Meyer's *Twilight*. She was the principal investigator for the AHRC-funded Global Gothic network and is the editor of the forthcoming *globalgothic* (Manchester University Press).

Sue Chaplin is Senior Lecturer in Romantic and Gothic Literature at Leeds Metropolitan University. She is the author of *Speaking of Dread: Law, Sensibility and the Sublime in Eighteenth-century Women's Fiction*, *The Gothic and the Rule of Law: 1864–1820*, *Gothic Literature: Texts, Contexts, Concepts* and she co-edited *The Romanticism Handbook* in 2011 with Professor Joel Faflak. She is also co-editor of the online journal *Literature Compass: Romanticism*.

Brigid Cherry is a Research Fellow in Communication, Culture and Creative Arts at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, UK. Her research focuses on horror cinema and fan cultures, particularly the female horror film audience. She has recently published work on horror fan canons, feminine handicrafting in vampire fandom, projected interactivity in *Supernatural* and *Twilight* fan fiction, and *Doctor Who* fans' responses to the return of the series. Her film guidebook on *Horror* was published by Routledge in 2009, she is co-editor of *Twenty-First-Century Gothic* published in 2011, and has edited a collection on *True Blood* (Tauris, 2012).

Justin D. Edwards is Professor of English Literature at the University of Surrey, England. He has published several books, including *Grotesque*, *Mobility at Large*, *Postcolonial Literature*, *Gothic Canada*, and *Gothic Passages*. He is also the co-editor of *Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture* and *Postcolonial Travel Writing*.

M. O. Grenby is Professor of Eighteenth-Century Studies in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University, UK. His books include *The Anti-Jacobin Novel* (2001), *Children's Literature* (2008), *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (ed. with Julia Briggs and Dennis Butts, 2008), *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature* (ed. with Andrea Immel, 2009) and *The Child Reader 1700–1840* (2011), which won the 2012 Harvey Darton prize for studies in children's literature.

Katie Halsey is Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Literature at the University of Stirling. Recent publications include *Jane Austen and her Readers, 1786–1945* (Anthem, 2012), and *The History of Reading* (2010), co-edited with Rosalind Crone and Shafquat Towheed. She has also published numerous articles on the history of reading, Jane Austen and Romantic-period print culture.

Diane Long Hoeveler is Professor of English at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is author of *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in*

the European Imaginary, 1780–1820 (2010), which won the Allan Lloyd Smith memorial award from the International Gothic Association; *Gothic Feminism* (1998); and *Romantic Androgyny* (1990). Other publications include a co-authored critical study of Charlotte Brontë; the Houghton Mifflin volume of *Wuthering Heights*; and such co-edited volumes as *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of British Romanticism* (3 vols); *Approaches to Teaching Jane Eyre*; *Approaches to Teaching the Gothic* (both for the MLA); *Interrogating Orientalism*; *Comparative Romanticisms*; *Romanticism and its Other Discourses*; *Romantic Drama*; *Romanticism and the Law*; *Women of Color*; *Women's Literary Creativity and the Female Body*; and the *Historical Dictionary of Feminism*. More recently, she co-edited a Broadview edition of Edgar Allan Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (2010). She served as President of the International Conference of Romanticism from 2001–3, and is now co-editor of the *European Romantic Review*.

Jerrold E. Hogle is University Distinguished Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies and Honors in English at the University of Arizona. The recipient of Guggenheim and Mellon Fellowships (among other awards) for research, he has authored or edited numerous books and essays on Romantic and Gothic literature, among them *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* and *The Undergrounds of "The Phantom of the Opera"*. He is currently putting together *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic* (forthcoming) and writing actively on the Gothic-Romantic relationship, mainly in English literature.

James Kelly is Lecturer in English at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Charles Maturin: Authorship, Authenticity, and the Nation* (Four Courts, 2011), and editor of *Ireland and Romanticism: Publics, Nations, and Scenes of Cultural Production* (Palgrave, 2011), as well as numerous articles on Irish and Scottish interactions in the period.

Ewan Kirkland lectures in film and screen studies at the University of Brighton. Specializing in the study of horror videogames, his work has been published in *Gothic Studies*, *Games and Culture*, *Convergence*, *Camera Obscura* and *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*. Ewan also writes on popular cinema, fantasy television and children's culture, aspects of which he has published in *Scope*, *Slayage* and *Animation*. Currently Ewan is organizing a conference on the *My Little Pony* series.

Roger Luckhurst is Professor of English at Birkbeck College, University of London. His latest book is *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Elizabeth McCarthy has published essays on Romantic aesthetics and the serial killer, the vampire body and its mutilation, WWI Propaganda and Post-WWI American Advertising, the ghost stories of Margaret Oliphant, and female juvenile delinquency in 1950s America. She has also co-edited the books *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear* (2007), *It Came From the 1950s!: Popular Culture Popular Anxieties* (2011), and *Forever Young?: The Changing Images of America* (2012). She is the co-founder of the online journal *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* (<http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com>). She is currently co-editing the book *Lost Souls* and writing a book on True Crime literature. She teaches in the School of English, Trinity College, Dublin.

Emma McEvoy lectures in the department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the University of Westminster. She has published various articles on Gothic and Romantic topics, and is co-editor, with Catherine Spooner, of the *Routledge Companion to Gothic* (2007).

Neil McRobert is a Doctoral student at the University of Stirling. His research focuses on the intersection of postmodernism and the Gothic, in particular the use of metafiction, parody and narrative game-playing. Other interests include Horror and Fantasy Cinema, contemporary American fiction and literature of the *fin de siècle*. He is the co-editor of *Transgression and its Limits* (2012). He is also a Postgraduate Representative of the International Gothic Association.

Anthony Mandal is Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Associate Director of the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research at Cardiff University. He is the author of books and articles on Jane Austen, Gothic fiction and nineteenth-century print culture, and is one of the General Editors of the *New Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.

James Morgart is a PhD candidate at Pennsylvania State University where he is currently studying Postwar American Gothic Literature and Film. He also serves as Director of Media Distribution for Viscera Film Festival, a horror film festival dedicated to the promotion of the work of female genre filmmakers.

Barry Murnane is Fellow in German at St. John's College, Oxford. After gaining a PhD from the University of Göttingen (2006), he was Assistant Professor for German and Comparative Literature at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. He has published widely on Germany and the Gothic, including the recent edited volume with Andrew Cusack, *Popular Revenants. The German Gothic and its International Reception, 1800–2000* (2012).

Martin Myrone is Lead Curator, British Art to 1800, Tate Britain, London. He has curated and published widely in the field of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British art. He was curator of the exhibitions *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (Tate Britain 2006) and *John Martin: Apocalypse* (Tate Britain 2011–12), and is the author of *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750–1810* as well as monographs on Stubbs, Fuseli and Blake.

Franz J. Potter is an Associate Professor at National University in California. He is the author of *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835* and the editor of the journal *Studies in Gothic Fiction*.

Hannah Priest is an early-career researcher currently working as a Lecturer in Medieval Literature at the University of Manchester and as a Researcher at Liverpool John Moores University. She has published essays and journal articles on both late-medieval romance and contemporary genre fiction, and her current project is a cultural history of female werewolves (with Manchester University Press). Her research interests include sex, violence and monstrosity, particularly in fairy, werewolf and vampire narratives, and the integrity (or otherwise) of so-called “master narratives.”

David Punter is Professor of English at the University of Bristol. He is the author of various works on the Gothic, of which the best known is *The Literature of Terror* (1980; revised two-volume edition 1996). His most recent published work includes *Metaphor* (2007), *Modernity* (2007) and *Rapture: Literature, Addiction, Secrecy* (2009). His latest book, *The Literature of Pity*, will appear in 2013.

Nicole Reynolds is an Associate Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at Ohio University. She is the author of *Building Romanticism: Literature and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2010).

Diego Saglia teaches English Literature at the University of Parma (Italy) and his research focuses on Romantic-period literature and culture. In the field of Gothic studies, he has published essays on Ann Radcliffe, William Beckford, narrative poetry, melodrama and other forms of stage Gothic.

Sean Silver is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Michigan. His work on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Anglophone culture addresses collections, museums, libraries, and other ways of thinking about the material past.

Matthew Wynn Sivils, formerly a wildlife biologist, is an Associate Professor of English at Iowa State University. He has published several articles on American Gothic and environmental literature, and is founding co-editor of the award-winning scholarly journal, *Literature in the Early American Republic*.

Catherine Spooner is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Lancaster University, UK. Her publications include *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*, *Contemporary Gothic* and *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*. Her latest book is entitled *Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of Happy Gothic*.

Rosemary Sweet is Professor of Urban History at the University of Leicester. She has published on aspects of urban politics and culture and on antiquarianism and the study of the past in the long eighteenth century. Her publications include *Antiquaries: the Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2004) and *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, 1690–1820* (2012).

Douglass H. Thomson is Professor of Literature and Philosophy at Georgia Southern University. His most recent work on Gothic literature includes an electronic edition of Walter Scott's *An Apology for Tales of Terror* (1799) for the Walter Scott Digital Archive of the University of Edinburgh; a critical edition of M.G. Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (Broadview Press, 2009); an essay on "The Gothic Ballad" in *The New Companion to the Gothic* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); and "A Note on One of the Earliest Gothic Ballads: Frank Sayers' 'Sir Egwin'" in *Papers on Language and Literature* (2010).

Dale Townshend is Senior Lecturer in Gothic and Romantic Studies at the University of Stirling, Scotland. His publications include *Gothic: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (with Fred Botting, 2004); *The Orders of Gothic: Foucault, Lacan, and the Subject of Gothic Writing, 1764–1820* (2007); *Gothic Shakespeares* (with John Drakakis, 2008); *Macbeth: A Critical Guide* (with John Drakakis, 2013); and *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* (with Angela Wright, 2014). He is currently completing a monograph entitled *Gothic Antiquity: History, Romance and the Architectural Imagination, 1760–1840*.

Isabella van Elferen is Assistant Professor of Music and Media at Utrecht University (NL). Isabella has published widely on film and TV music, videogame music, and Gothic theory and subcultures, and baroque sacred music. She is the author of *Gothic Music: The Sounds of the Uncanny* (2012), *Mystical Love in the German Baroque: Theology – Poetry – Music* (2009), and the editor of *Nostalgia or Perversion? Gothic Rewriting from the Eighteenth Century until the Present Day* (2007). Isabella is Division Head of Visual and Performance Arts and Audiences for the International Association of the Fantastic in the Arts. She is editor for *The*

Soundtrack, member of the advisory board of *Horror Studies*, and guest editor of the *Journal for the Fantastic in the Arts* (2013).

Tamara Wagner is Associate Professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Her books include *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction: Plotting Money and the Novel Genre, 1815–1901* (2010), *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel, 1740–1890* (2004), and *Occidentalism in Novels of Malaysia and Singapore, 1819–2004* (2005), as well as edited collections on *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2007; paperback edition 2010), *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel: Rereading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers* (2009), and *Victorian Settler Narratives: Emigrants, Cosmopolitans and Returnees in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2011). She has recently completed a scholarly edition of Frances Trollope's 1843 novel *The Barnabys in America*. Wagner's current projects include a study of Victorian narratives of failed emigration and a special issue on colonial girlhood for the journal *Women's Writing*.

Alexandra Warwick is the Head of the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the University of Westminster, UK. She has published work on Gothic and on Victorian literature and culture more widely.

Gilda Williams is a London-based contemporary art critic and curator, and a Lecturer on the MFA in Curating programme, Goldsmiths College, University of London. Williams is a London correspondent for *Artforum* magazine and was from 1994–2005 Editor and Commissioning Editor (from 1997) for contemporary art at Phaidon Press. In her research she examines critically the meaning of “Gothic” in contemporary art, also the subject of her doctoral dissertation. Her book *The Gothic* (“Documents of Contemporary Art”, MIT/Whitechapel Press) was published in 2007.

Sara Wasson is Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University. Her monograph *Urban Gothic of the Second World War* (Palgrave, 2010) was co-winner of the Allan Lloyd Smith Memorial Prize from the International Gothic Association and shortlisted for the ESSE Award for Cultural Studies in English. She co-edited *Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010* with Emily Alder (Liverpool University Press, 2011). Her two research specialties are national Gothics and the discourse of trauma, and contemporary science fiction examined through a medical humanities lens.

Joanne Watkiss is Lecturer in English Literature in the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her monograph, *Gothic Contemporaries: The Haunted Text*, was published as part of the Gothic Literary Studies series with the University of Wales Press in 2012.

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock is Professor of English at Central Michigan University. He is the author or editor of 14 books, including *Charles Brockden Brown* (University of Wales Press, 2012), *The Vampire Film: Undead Cinema* (Columbia University Press, 2012), and *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (Fordham University Press, 2008). He is also the general editor for the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters* (Ashgate).

Angela Wright is Senior Lecturer in Romantic Literature at the University of Sheffield. She is the editor of “Eighteenth-century Gothic,” a special issue of *Gothic Studies* (14/1, May 2012), the author of *Gothic Fiction* (Palgrave, 2007) and *Britain*,

France and the Gothic, 1764–1820: The Import of Terror (Cambridge University Press, 2013). At present, she is working on a study of Mary Shelley, and, with Dale Townshend, a collection of essays entitled *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The editors would like to express their thanks to Emma Joyes and Niall Slater at Routledge for initially proposing this volume to us, to Polly Dodson for her enthusiasm and support, and to Elizabeth Levine and Ruth Moody for having seen through the process of production with such good humour and efficiency.

The world was void,
The populace and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless –
A lump of death – a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirred within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge –
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon their mistress had expired before;
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them – She was the universe.

From Lord Byron, "Darkness" (1817)

INTRODUCTION



Dale Townshend

The Gothic World. In this, the second decade of the twenty-first century, the title-phrase of this collection might well bring to mind the nightmarish visions of global apocalypse and tentative, painful recovery so graphically figured in Max Brooks's 2006 novel, *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*. Through knowing recourse to a narrative trope that reaches as far back as the eighteenth century, Brooks's narrator, a researcher for the United Nations' Postwar Commission Report, offers up in *World War Z* a version of Gothic fiction's "lost manuscript" or "censored chapter," an unwieldy textual dossier comprised of the many transcriptions of personal testimonies of the Zombie War that he, ever since the War's end, has labored meticulously to compile, but which, through the utilitarian demands of his superiors, would otherwise have fallen into oblivion. "It was all too intimate," the chairperson of the Postwar Commission Report coldly informs him, attempting thus to explain and rationalize to the narrator the Commission's decision to excise and delete from the final edition of his report almost half of his recorded materials (Brooks 2006:1); "Too many opinions, too many feelings," she cavalierly continues, "That's not what this report is about. We need clear facts and figures, unclouded by the human factor" (Brooks 2006: 1). Coming, as it does, at the end of an arduous process of interviewing and transcription, the news is understandably crushing for the narrator. But his determination to conserve, through the writing and publication of his research, precisely this "human factor" (Brooks 2006: 2) as it is given such powerful expression in each of the book's oral testimonies seems particularly pertinent, especially when we realize that it is primarily the condition of being a living and breathing human being that the previous ten years of onslaught by hordes of the walking dead have placed seriously under threat. As the Chilean merchant shipmaster, Ernesto Olgun, interviewed only narrowly in the disaster's wake, poignantly observes,

The living dead had taken more from us than land and loved ones. They'd robbed us of our confidence as the planet's dominant life-form. We were a shaken, broken species, driven to the edge of extinction and grateful only for a tomorrow with perhaps a little less suffering than today. Was this the legacy one

would leave to our children, a level of anxiety and self-doubt not seen since our simian ancestors cowered in the tallest trees? What kind of world would they rebuild? Would they rebuild at all? Could they continue to progress, knowing that they had been powerless to reclaim their future? And what if that future saw another rise of the living dead?

(Brooks 2006: 267)

Here, the recidivist fears of the return to a degenerative, ape-like state that we are accustomed to seeing in Gothic fictions of the Victorian *fin de siècle* merge with a decidedly postmodern anxiety concerning the imminence of a monstrous, post-human future. Indeed, concerns around the future of the human race are articulated throughout Brooks's novel, as the forces of science, medicine, chemical warfare, military prowess and democratic government, all commonly accepted markers of progress and human achievement, prove spectacularly ineffectual against the ever-swelling tides of the Undead. Roaming the furthest reaches of the globe, and destructive of towns, cities, natural resources, nations and individuals alike, zombies bear the horrific potential to annihilate all forms of life on earth, and we, the human beings who populate it, are utterly powerless to prevent it.

Of course, zombies, those lumbering, fleshy, heavy-set relatives of their more elegant and nimble vampiric ancestors, constitute the Gothic cipher par excellence in this, our post-millennial world of late-industrial capitalism and “zombie economics” (Quiggin 2010). Contemporary popular culture (films, novels, graphic novels, computer games) is practically teeming with these figures, albeit, as the example of several zombie memoirs indicates, not always in ways that are distinctly horrifying, terrifying or, indeed, “Gothic.” However, the “Gothic” qualities to Brooks's vision in *World War Z* might be said to reside in the particular form of corporeality to which his monsters give such awful form. During one of the earliest outbreaks of the plague of the living dead in Meteora, Greece, for example, the retirement-seeking inmate of a monastery, Stanley Macdonald, describes his encounter with a zombie in the language of immediacy and gross physicality, two of the definitive qualities of the “horror” sub-genre of Gothic writing since, at least, the publication of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* in 1796:

A hand was sticking out of the limestone. It was still moving. I reacted from the gut, leaned forward, grabbed the hand, felt that grip. Like steel, almost crushed my fingers. I pulled back, tried to get away. It wouldn't let me go. I pulled harder, dug my feet in. First the arm came free, then the head, the torn face, wide eyes and gray lips, then the other hand, grabbing my arm and squeezing, then came the shoulders. I fell back, the thing's top half coming with me. The waist down was still jammed under the rocks, still connected to the upper torso by a line of entrails. It was still moving, still clawing me, trying to pull my arm into its mouth. I reached for my weapon.

(Brooks 2006: 20)

Similarly, when Fernando Oliveira, the emaciated, drug-addicted surgeon practicing in the depths of the Amazon Rain Forest, unwittingly transplants into his patient, Herr Muller, a donor-heart that has been infected with the zombie virus, he enters

the patient's room to witness before him a scene of horrific, gross corporeality as the newly zombified Herr Muller devours Doctor Silva:

I noticed blood seeping out from under the door. I entered and found it covering the floor. Silva was lying in the far corner, Muller crouching over him with his fat, pale, hairy back to me. I can't remember how I got his attention, whether I called his name, uttered a swear, or did anything at all but just stand there. Muller turned to me, bits of bloody meat falling from his open mouth. I saw that his steel sutures had been partially pried open and a thick, black, gelatinous fluid oozed through the incision. He got shakily to his feet, lumbering slowly toward me.

(Brooks 2006: 25)

Brooks's narrative is studded with gruesome episodes throughout. If the term "Gothic," in the words of Alfred E. Longueil, is taken in its current literary-critical sense as "a mere synonym for that grotesque, ghastly, and violently superhuman in fiction" that originated in the second half of the eighteenth century (Longueil 1923: 453), then Brooks's novel, in its preoccupations with hordes of reanimated, flesh-devouring corpses that ooze dark liquid and bear the foul stench of putrefaction, is "Gothic" in the extreme, the fact that the term itself never features in the course of the narrative notwithstanding. The global dimensions of Brooks's vision are encapsulated in the novel's title: *World War Z*, otherwise known as "The Crisis," "The Dark Years," "The Walking Plague," "Z War One" or simply as "The Zombie War," is one that starts in China, but then rapidly spreads to Tibet, Greece, Brazil, Barbados, South Africa, Israel, Palestine, the USA, England, Antarctica, India, Russia, Greenland, Ireland, Canada, Bohemia, South Korea, Japan, Cuba, Australia, Chile, Finland and beyond. North and South, East and West, nations developed and undeveloped are all enlisted in its horrors, as these ghouls pursue their indiscriminate hunger for human flesh, traversing all national borders and geographic boundaries as they do so. War in the novel remains total, universal and continuous, and the threat of obliteration all-encompassing, pervasive and extreme.

GOTHIC SWARMS

The dynamic that informs the global reach and spread of zombieism in *World War Z* is one of viral infection, and like a part-vampire, part-*proto-zombie* narrative such as Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954), the narrative makes constant recourse to notions of infestation, outbreak, plague, epidemic and blight in order to account for, and make sense of, the zombie's ubiquitous, universal presence: conceptualized as "a global catastrophe in the making" (Brooks 2006: 63), human resources worldwide are mobilized against "a mysterious uber-plague that reanimate[s] the dead" (Brooks 2006: 63). And yet, metaphors of infection and disease in the novel are rapidly taken over by a more prevalent image-system, one that is consistently deployed in order to mark the extent of the zombies' global presence: swarming, the action of "assembling in a swarm or dense crowd" (*OED*), and often relating specifically to the gathering and departure from the hive of a swarm of bees, wasps, hornets or similar winged insects. One Ahmed Farahnakian, for instance, observes

of zombie-infested Greenland that “So many areas were already infected, great swarms slouching towards our cities. Our border guards were overwhelmed, entire outposts buried under waves of ghouls” (Brooks 2006: 90). Later, speaking from Northern Ireland, Philip Adler recalls being stranded without food and water, “just waiting to be rescued with the dead swarming outside, and I don’t know how many infected inside” (Brooks 2006: 112). Similarly, at the Udaipur Lake Palace in Rajasthan, India, project manager Sardar Khan observes that “the only thing behind those people was a raging swarm of God knows how many million zombies” (Brooks 2006: 132). For Mister Sinclair, Director of the US Government’s newly formed Department of Strategic Resources (DeStRes), the swarming of the zombies is akin more to the movement of carnivorous ants than bees: “Did you ever hear of Don Hill? Ever see the movie Roy Elliot did on him? It was when the infestation hit the San Joaquin Valley, the dead swarming over his fences, attacking his cattle, tearing them apart like African driver ants” (Brooks 2006: 142–43). Roy Eliot, in Malibu, California, speaks proudly of the “rapid fire” of the guns that he has had at his disposal: “exactly what you needed,” he observes, “in swarm attacks” such as those with which he has been confronted (Brooks 2006: 165). And so the examples in Brooks’s novel proliferate, the metaphors gathering, collecting and accreting in a way that enacts the swarming movements of the zombies themselves: “My ankle was throbbing, my lungs were aching,” Colonel Christina Eliopolis relates, “and the swarm was now gaining on me fast” (Brooks 2006: 183). And as Admiral Xu Zhicai points out, swarming need not necessarily imply a line of flight, for, in testifying to the sea-borne dimensions that the threat has assumed, he recounts how “Zombies, hundreds of them, were swarming over the hull. More were arriving each second, stumbling across the barren sand, climbing over each other to claw, scrape, actually bite the *Zheng’s* steel” (Brooks 2006: 251). Beset by flesh-eating monsters that swarm globally with the insistence of enraged and bloodthirsty insects, the world as it is rendered in Max Brooks’s *World War Z* is a Gothic one indeed.

Brooks’s novel is not the only contemporary Gothic fiction to bear witness to what we might term a “Gothic world.” Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006), for instance, offers up a terrifying vision of post-apocalyptic existence that is rendered all the more “Gothic” by the fact that the nature of the disaster that underpins it remains forever undisclosed. Part-human and part-environmental, the founding catastrophe is knowable to the reader only through its palpably horrific effects, as a dying father and his emaciated son make their way across a moribund but still vaguely recognizable landscape in search of food and shelter. Armed with neither the hope of the fugitive nor the gratitude of the survivor, the two are locked into a state of living death, one poignantly described by the boy’s mother just prior to her suicide as a form of zombieism: “We’re the walking dead in a horror film” (McCarthy 2007: 57). Figured in McCarthy’s characteristically sparse but highly evocative style, the landscapes that the two traverse are as shrouded in the mists of terror as the vague but terrifying nightmares that grip the father from the novel’s opening pages: smoke momentarily clears to reveal a burned-out wasteland, stinging rain and sleet hold up to reveal a gutted house, hideous shrieks resound out of the darkness as the boy attempts to sleep, nameless and faceless men march by with lines of shackled slaves, and others feast cannibalistically on the bodies of human survivors. Though its precise coordinates are never clearly articulated, danger in the world of the novel is

omnipresent, and death litters the landscape throughout: “The mummied dead everywhere. The flesh cloven along the bones, the ligaments dried to tug and taut as wires. Shriveled and drawn like latterday bogfolk, their faces of boiled sheeting, the yellowed palings of their teeth” (McCarthy 2007: 23). Death, in fact, becomes in *The Road* the only certainty, the only force that is capable of puncturing the prevailing veil of vagueness and terror with the visceral immediacy of horror: “Shapes of dried blood in the stubble grass and gray coils of viscera where the slain had been field-dressed and hauled away. The wall beyond held a frieze of human heads, all faced alike, dried and caved with their taut grins and shrunk eyes” (McCarthy 2007: 94).

Like Brooks’s *World War Z*, Justin Cronin’s recent apocalyptic novel, *The Passage* (2010), figures a “Gothic world” beset by swarms of monstrous creatures. Cronin begins his narrative on a note of infection and disease. The world in which *The Passage* opens is an America of the not-so-distant future, a world that has been devastated by the growing escalation of the “War on Terr-rah” (Cronin 2010: 85). America has been waging war for 15 years, its enemies including Iran, Iraq, Russia and various other countries: “war was everywhere,” we are told, cancerously “metastasizing like a million maniac cells run amok across the planet, and everyone was in it” (Cronin 2010: 84). An expedition funded by USAMRIID is sent to the jungles of Bolivia to investigate a virus. However, members of the expedition are attacked by hundreds of thousands of bats, “a huge swarm that blotted out the stars” (Cronin 2010: 24), and eventually succumb to “some speeded-up version of Bolivian hemorrhagic fever – bleeding from the mouth and nose, the skin and eyes rosy with burst capillaries” (Cronin 2010: 23). Survivor Tim Fanning, who in due course becomes Subject Zero, is taken back to America, and the power of the virus harnessed by the military to produce the ultimate weapon of mass destruction: “the human form itself, weaponized” (Cronin 2010: 85). Part vampire, part zombie, these beings resemble, more than anything, “some kind of giant insect” (Cronin 2010: 68).

From the outset of Cronin’s novel, swarming is metaphorically employed as a means of signifying the onset of horror. Sensations of “a buzzing weightlessness, like a swarm of bees” convey that “something had happened, something terrible” (Cronin 2010: 101), while dreams of a “massive swarm of bees covering [one’s] body” (Cronin 2010: 454) become part of the infection process itself. America has been transformed into the empire of the undead, and it is thus fitting that the central analogy in *The Passage* becomes that of the hive. A group of survivors who strike out across a new American frontier, the “Darklands,” soon realize that the virals are like bees, traveling in swarms when they attack and sending out scouts to establish new hives where more bees might cluster. Although *The Passage* does not envisage the apocalypse in quite the same universal and global dimensions as *World War Z*, it nonetheless consistently gestures toward a broader sense of a “Gothic World.” The disaster here may well be the product of American military aspirations, of a project appropriately named Project Noah, but this, it turns out, is just one in a series of such apocalyptic moments that have taken place throughout history, ever since that first apocalypse, in fact, when, according to Genesis, “all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth” (Genesis 7.21). Ancient statues of these virals are found in the jungles of

Bolivia, and are much like those found in cave drawings, temples and gravesites around the world. As Cronin's use of Shakespeare's Sonnet 64 as an epigraph to the novel indicates – "When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd" – this epidemic has occurred countless times before: the outbreak in America is only the regeneration of a primitive germ that already exists in nature, facilitated this time by warfare and scientific research. Appropriately, then, the second book in the series, *The Twelve* (2012), repeatedly links the attack of virals to the attacks of creatures from the natural world. Where the rotting flesh of the virals' victims remains, flies buzz in "vast black swarms" (Cronin 2012: 94–95), and as the heroes of the new frontier hack their way through undergrowth toward what is left of Houston, "nature unveiled its true malevolent purpose: everything here wanted to sting you, swarm you, bite you" (Cronin 2012: 385). It would seem that nature, too, is capable of swarming in Cronin's apocalyptic world.

Though bound by similar terms and metaphors, the exponents of what we have subsequently come to regard as the political "myth of Gothic origins" in the long eighteenth century figured their particular sense of a "Gothic world" in ways that are quite antithetical to that of Brooks, Cronin and McCarthy. From around the time of the Glorious Revolution and throughout much of the eighteenth century, British historiographers, both Scottish and English, and of both Whig and Tory political affiliations, sketched out various versions of a powerful political ideology, clothed in historical garb, concerning the Goths' gradual movement across, and eventual inhabitation of, much of the known civilized world. Though there are considerable differences between them, the historiographic narratives that were peddled initially by such ancient historians as Cornelius Tacitus in *Germania* (AD 98), Jordanes in *Getica* (c. 551) and the Venerable Bede in *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (731), and then later by Nathaniel Bacon, Richard Verstegan, Lord Bolingbroke, Paul Henri Mallet, William Temple, James Thomson, Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, Richard Hurd, Thomas Warton and numerous others, consistently sounded a few common themes: the Gothic tribe that was said to originate in Germany or central and Northern Europe "swarmed" through various parts of the known world, bringing with them the powers of civilization, democracy, Liberty and Enlightenment as they did so. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this sense of the past was especially popular amongst English historiographers of a whiggish political affiliation in the eighteenth century, in all their investments in teleological narratives of continuous progress and improvement. Samuel Klinger and R.J. Smith have outlined its constituent elements as follows (Klinger 1952; Smith 1987): in wishing to assert the prerogatives of Parliament against the autocratic measures of the Stuart line, antiquarian thinkers from the end of the seventeenth century onward made a strategic appeal to a tradition of democratic power-sharing between the Monarch and the Parliament – the so-called "Gothick balance" – that was said to have originated with the "witenagemot" of the Gothic tribe in the "woods of Germany," and which was felicitously imported onto English soil with the arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the year 449 AD. Through a series of mistranslations and strategic misrepresentations, all Germanic tribes, including those that originated from Scandinavia, were construed as "Goths" in the work of the sixth-century historian Jordanes, thus substituting the name of one particular Barbarian tribe – the people who crossed the Danube in 376 AD, and who were responsible for the sacking of the

Roman Empire in the year 410 AD – as a moniker for all invading Germanic nations. Although, in the work of Jordanes, the Goths, having originated in Scandza in Southern Scandinavia, were said to have spread to most parts of Europe and Asia, thus dividing the tribe into the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, it was their presence on English soil that most preoccupied eighteenth-century historians in Britain.

Sir William Temple's *An Introduction to the History of England* (1695), for instance, having sketched out a history that includes an account of ancient Albion, the arrival of the Romans, the establishment of Britannia and the confining of the Picts and Scots to the savage territory north of Hadrian's Wall, turns to address the matter of English antiquity in the period following the Roman withdrawal. Vexed by the endless cycles of violence and aggression emanating from the Scots and Picts, their belligerent northern neighbors, the Britons under Vortigern, rendered especially vulnerable by the Romans' retreat, made their famous "Gothick appeal" to the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa for much-needed military assistance and reinforcement. Through recourse to a metaphor that, by 1695, was already well established, Temple claims that "The Saxons were one Branch of those *Gothick* Nations, which swarming from the Northern Hive, had under the Conduct of *Odin*, possessed themselves anciently of all those mighty Tracts of Land that surround the Baltick sea" (Temple 1695: 44). Their presence on English soil marks as much an importing of the Gothick tribe's "great Love of Liberty, and their Valour in preserving it" (Temple 1695: 46) as it does the affirmation of military power and prowess (Temple 1695: 47–48). Subsequent arrivals of the Goths on English soil brought about the further subjugation of the Picts and Scots, the deeper entrenchment of the Scottish/English national and geographic divide, as well as the establishment of a Northern and Southern Saxon Kingdom. Enmity between the invading Goths and the native Britons seems initially to have ensued, and in Temple's account, the political tensions and religious and cultural differences between the two nations seem not to have been inconsiderable. The Saxon presence in England, though, was soon augmented by the further "swarming" of similar Gothic tribes in the form of the Angles and the Jutes:

These [Saxons] heartened with Success, and proud of so great Possessions and Territories, invited and allured still greater Numbers of their own from abroad, who being of several Branches, and from several Coasts, arrived here under several names; among whom the Angles from *Schonen* and *Iutland*, swarmed over in such numbers, that they gave a new Name at length, to this Province, which from them was called *Angle-land*, and for easier sound *England*.

(Temple 1695: 54–55)

In turn, the spaces left vacant in Europe by the departure of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes for Britain were soon, themselves, "fill[ed] up again by new Swarms from the great Northern Hive" (Temple 1695: 62). The movement of the Goths across parts of Europe is one metaphorically akin to the movement of bees, ants or similar insects. Temple's *An Introduction to the History of England* concludes with an account of the establishment of the seven Kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy, and the fleeing of the vestiges of the native Britons westward into Wales and southward into Cornwall.

Temple's *History* is by no means a simple encomiastic tribute to the virtues of the conquering Gothick nations: the seven Kingdoms of the Heptarchy, for instance, are

wooed by the meretricious attractions of luxury, and plagued by political power-struggles that resulted only in further strife. Throughout his study, in fact, the semantic implications of barbarism and violence that had accreted around the word “Gothic” ever since Renaissance historiographers such as Giorgio Vasari had used it pejoratively as a means of denouncing the architectural remains of the benighted medieval past seem to persist: “few and mean Authors of those barbarous and illiterate Ages, and perhaps the rough course of those lawless Times and Actions,” he concedes, “would have been too ignoble a Subject for a good Historian” (Temple 1695: 61). Nonetheless, it is to this complex historical process of invasion, conquest and eventual assimilation that Britain – or, more narrowly and accurately, England – owes its origins, not least of all the system of constitutional Law upon which the nation so prides itself: “The Laws of this Country which before were Roman, changed now into Old Saxon Customs or Constitutions” (Temple 1695: 64). As this indicates, most of the historical narratives that recounted the arrival of the Goths in England verged on the panegyric.

It is true that James Thomson, in his charting of the progress of the personified Goddess of Liberty in his lengthy *Liberty, A Poem* (1734), had largely reserved the term “Gothic” as a synonym for the darkness and barbarism that, in his estimation, had prevailed across Europe prior to the civilizing impetus of the Renaissance. His account of the Gothic siege of Rome in Part Three, in all its destructiveness and aggression, is especially suggestive in this regard, for here, “Gothic” serves negatively as an epithet for tyranny, darkness, scholastic discord, Catholic superstition, ignorance and violence, negative values, he claims, which were embodied in the form of the Gothic cathedral. Nonetheless, when Thomson turns to address Liberty’s gracing of Britain’s shores, from the arrival of the Saxons from Scythia and up to the time of the Norman conquest, his poem makes recourse to the culturally prevalent myth of England’s noble Gothic origins, constructing a past of agency and freedom that was merely threatened, but not entirely eclipsed, by the yoke of Norman Tyranny:

The haughty Norman seiz’d at once an isle,
For which, thro’ many a century, in vain,
The Roman, Saxon, Dane, had toil’d and bled.
Of Gothic nations this the final burst;
And, mix’d the genius of these people all,
Their virtues mix’d in one exalted stream,
Here the rich tide of English blood grew full.

(Thomson 1766: 2.126)

Notions of the “Gothic” in Thomson, having taken a rather circuitous historical and semantic journey, thus eventually come to serve as a byword for an aboriginal, particularly English form of democratic government:

Yet, o’er these Gothic states, the King and Chiefs
Retain’d the high prerogative of war,
And with enormous property engross’d
The mingled power. But on BRITANNIA’S shore

Now present, I to raise My reign began
By raising the Democracy, the third
And broadest bulwark of the guarded state.
Then was the full the perfect [*sic*] plan disclos'd
Of BRITAIN'S matchless Constitution, mixt
Of mutual checking and supporting powers,
KING, LORDS, and COMMONS; nor the name of Free
Deserving while the Vassal-man droop'd.

(Thomson 1766: 2.129)

As Thomson's whiggish history continues to relate, the banner of national liberty would only be fully unfurled with the restoration of democracy under the reigns of Kings Edward III and Henry V, and, beyond that, with the vanquishing of the Stuart Dynasty and the "monstrous" doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings attendant upon it (Thomson 1766: 2.136).

In Bishop Thomas Percy's English translation of the Swiss writer Paul Henri Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* (1770), the Scythians or Goths are represented somewhat less equivocally as a noble and valiant aboriginal tribe that succeeded in spreading its values of liberty, democracy, piety, rationality and virtue across most of mainland Europe:

If we recur back to the remotest times, we observe a nation issuing step by step from the forests of Scythia, incessantly increasing and dividing to take possession of the uncultivated countries which it met with its progress. Very soon after, we see the same people, like a tree full of vigour, extending long branches over all Europe; we see them also carrying with them, wherever they came, from the borders of the Black Sea, to the extremities of Spain, of Sicily, and Greece, a religion simple and martial as themselves, a form of government dictated by good sense and liberty, a restless unconquered spirit, apt to take fire at the very mention of subjection and constraint, and a ferocious courage, nourished by a savage and vagabond life.

(Mallet 1770: 1.li)

In the course of *Northern Antiquities*, the system of Gothic values that Mallet wishes to celebrate comes variously to include courage, moderation, democratic forms of election, the checking of the absolute power of the sovereign, liberation from the yoke of Rome, an aversion to slavery and a "peculiar attention to the rights of humanity" (Mallet 1770: 1.liii). In keeping with the established metaphorical idiom, the movement of the Goths across civilized nations for Mallet is as much a "swarming" as it is a form of happy "impregnation":

In effect, we every where see in those swarms of Germans and Scandinavians, a troop of savage warriors who seem only born for ravage and destruction, changed into a sensible and free people as soon as ever they had confirmed their conquests; impregnating (if I may so say) their institutions with a spirit of order and equality; electing for their kings such of their princes of the blood royal as they judged most worthy to wear the crown; dividing between those kings and

the whole nation the exercise of sovereign power; reserving to the general assemblies the right of making laws, and deciding important matters; and lastly, to give a solid support to the powers immediately essential to monarchy, distributing fiefs to the principal warriors, and assigning certain privileges proper to the several orders of the state.

(Mallet 1770: 2.166)

While Mallet's Swiss nationality made the appropriation of Gothic origins by British writers, even after translation of the text into English, a vexed and complicated issue, other writers turned with greater ease to the account of Goths offered up by the Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus. In 1777, for instance, John Aikin translated Tacitus's *A Treatise on the Situation, Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany* into English, asserting in his Preface to the work the claim that all the most civilized nations of the known world, not least of all England, derived from the Goths:

The *Treatise on the Manners of the Germans* has ever been esteemed as one of the most precious relics of the political or historical writings of antiquity; and by the course of events has been rendered more important to modern times than its author probably expected, who could scarcely foresee that the government, policy, and manners of the most civilized parts of the globe, were to originate from the woods and deserts [*sic*] of Germany.

(Aikin 1777: vii)

Aikin's sense of history as a form of "presentism" in the above extract becomes especially significant when, throughout the remainder of the tract, the Goths, the Germanic tribe noted for the purity of their racial lines, are hailed as the civilized world's harbingers of moral virtue; proportionate forms of punishment; resourceful rural subsistence; monogamous sexual relations; democratic forms of government and a corresponding checking of the unlimited powers of the Sovereign. To claim Gothic origins was thus also strategically to install at the very foundation of the nation the same set of political values that were being embraced and enshrined by the intellectual processes of the late Enlightenment.

It is for reasons such as these that a writer such as John Pinkerton would exert so much energy in seeking to prove, even to the extent of fulmination and forgery, the laudable Gothic origins of his native Scotland. Pinkerton published *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths*, his introduction to the history of ancient and modern Europe, in London in 1787. His gesture is, in part, a recuperative one, seeking not only to map his understanding of what constitutes a "Gothic world" through an account of those places in Asia and Europe where the Scythians or Goths were thought to have settled, but also to retrieve "Gothic" from the negative connotations of barbarism that the term had accrued since the Renaissance, and in a time closer to his own, through the cultural hegemony of neoclassicism:

Now, tho almost all Europe be possessed by the descendants of the Goths, a people from whom, as shall be shewn, the Greeks and Romans also spring; and the Goths transcended, even when barbarians, all nations in wisdom and way:

yet such is our ignorance, who are at present but slowly eloping from barbarism, that the name of Goth, the sacred name of our fathers, is an object of detestation!

(Pinkerton 1787: vii)

In the course of his study, the “*Scythæ, Getae or Gothi*,” all avowedly “but different names for one and the same people” (Pinkerton 1787: 5), are described, contra claims to the Goths’ Scandinavian and German origins advanced by Jordanes and Tacitus respectively, as having originated in Persia, spreading from there “to the Eutine [*sic*], and almost over all Europe” (Pinkerton 1787: 18), “excepting only that of Russia, Poland, and Hungary” (Pinkerton 1787: 3); “All the rest,” he continues, “is in the hands of the progeny of the Goths, or as we may justly say of the Goths” (Pinkerton 1787: 3). Pinkerton’s sense of the Gothic world is thus considerably more capacious than that of earlier writers, encompassing, as it does, the Eastern settlements of Asia, Southern Europe, and the countries of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark. Gothic swarming, in other words, appears in Pinkerton’s account to have been more geographically diffuse and less regionally concentrated.

Published in a context in which Scotland’s ancient origins had become a hotly debated aesthetic and political concern, Pinkerton’s determination to draw his native Scotland into the already extended boundaries of the Gothic world was a confrontational and deliberately controversial gesture. James Macpherson had published his first slim volume of Ossianic verse, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland*, in 1760; *Fingal, An Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, Together with Several Other Poems Composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal, Translated From the Gaelic Language* followed in 1761, *Temora* in 1763, and a weighty anthology, *The Works of Ossian*, in 1765. Undertaken in the spirit of a fervent antiquarian interest in, and admiration for, the sparse but legible remains of Scottish antiquity, these poetic works, together with Macpherson’s later *Original Papers, containing the Secret History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover* (1775), proudly attested to nothing if not Scotland’s noble Celtic past. But it was precisely Macpherson’s claims to an originally Celtic Scotland that motivated Pinkerton’s antiquarian endeavors, and henceforth his own efforts would be bitterly fuelled by the need to dispute Macpherson’s vision, dispel the myth of a Celtic Scotland, and replace it with a sound, empirical account of the nation’s Gothic past. At moments such as these in the *Dissertation*, Pinkerton’s pique is almost palpable:

The author [Macpherson] of that strange and truly Celtic work [*History of Great Britain*], having, with that overheated rashness, which genius colliding with perfect ignorance can alone inspire, attempted to introduce the most diseased dreams into the History of Scotland, thought he could, behind his Celtic mist, use equal freedoms with the history of Europe! Rash man, and ill advised!

(Pinkerton 1787: 91–92)

In his next tome, an *Enquiry into the History of Scotland, Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III* (1789), Pinkerton would continue to vent his spleen against Macpherson

and his claims to a Celtic Scotland. Self-consciously situating himself within an extended tradition of Scottish historiography, Pinkerton here seeks to refute and counter Scottish Celticism by advancing the claim that the original inhabitants of Scotland, the Cimbri, were a Gothic or Germanic people who issued from present-day Jutland, a fact he deduces from, and presumes to demonstrate through, the empirical study of the Picto-Gothic language. Celtic was little more than a bastardized form of Gothic. The Celts were little more than natural savages, and the traces of their language that remain happily attest to Scotland's Gothic past:

The Celts being natural savages, and regarded as such by all writers of all ages, their tongue was simple and poor, whence they were always borrowing of others; while hardly in modern European language can one word derived from the Celtic be found. Our Celtic seers of etymology, ignorant of all these facts, derive modern words from the Celtic, without suspecting the real truth, that the Celtic words are derived from them. Without complete knowledge of the Gothic, and it's [*sic*] dialects, no man ought to meddle with Celtic etymology, else he will blunder in utter darkness . . . The Goths were the conquering people, and superior in all things to the Celts; and so numerous that they spread over all Europe, and great parts of Asia, many centuries before Christ, while the Celts were pent up in two or three little corners.

(Pinkerton 1789: 1.137–38)

The debate over whether Scotland was of Celtic or Gothic origins was fiercely entered into by antiquarians of both persuasions, and as late as 1816 Sir Walter Scott would both register and respond to the debacle in the extended interchanges between Jonathan Oldbuck and Arthur Wardour in *The Antiquary*. In the 1780s, Pinkerton's determination to purge Scotland of Macpherson-inspired Celticism and argue instead for its place within a noble Gothic heritage was largely motivated by the need to install at the nation's origins the system of Gothic values that he had labored to outline in *A Dissertation*, a range of familiar, Enlightenment values that included the principles of democracy, ordered feudal structure and regulated Sovereign authority: "In the woods of Germany every man had a voice in general council" (Pinkerton 1787: 140). To believe otherwise was to plunge Scotland back into the "Celtic night" from which the arrival of the Goths was said to have delivered Britain in Thomson's *Liberty* (Thomson 1766: 2.624–25).

GOTHIC WORLDS, NOW AND THEN

As the Pinkerton/Macpherson debate suggests, the Gothic world in the eighteenth century was a carefully crafted political and ideological construct, a history in which only the most enlightened of peoples could participate and a category to which only the most civilized of nations could aspire. It is for this reason that a writer such as George Perkins Marsh would attempt to stake an American claim for Gothic ancestry in his treatise *The Goths in New England* (1843), maintaining that, in fleeing Britain, the early settlers of America sought to restore the noble and Enlightened Gothic values that were being compromised at home (Kliger 1952: 107). Earlier, Thomas Jefferson had similarly appropriated the foundational myth of the Enlightened,

freedom-loving Goth to the context of colonial, pre-revolutionary America (Michaud 2009: 21). In novels such as Brooks's *World War Z*, McCarthy's *The Road* and Cronin's *The Passage*, by contrast, the Gothic World is a world of horror, terror and waking nightmare, a global disaster-zone from which we can only wish to flee, even at the cost our own survival. Brooks's and Cronin's dystopian visions of a world inhabited by versions of the walking dead appear to be dark, mirrored inversions of the eighteenth-century Gothic utopia, and the swarming that is celebrated and actively invoked in the former becomes the source of ineffable fear and dread in the latter. Though both worlds are equally fictive – the not-so-brave new worlds of Brooks and Cronin are no less imaginary than the veritable “romance” of the Gothic past spun by numerous eighteenth-century politicians and historiographers – what separates one from the other is, of course, the different meanings ascribed to the word “Gothic” in the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries respectively. The negative connotations of the latter stand in stark contrast to the largely positive ones of the former, although, as Mark Madoff has pointed out, both the term's utopian and dystopian impulses were carefully exploited and contested even in the political interchanges between radicals and conservatives in the 1790s (Madoff 1979). Bound up in the semantic differences between late-eighteenth- and early twenty-first-century usages of the term “Gothic,” the notion of a “Gothic World” is nothing if not historically contingent. In the historiography of the eighteenth century, it was a vision of a glorious past world; in contemporary culture, it is the disturbing vision of the monstrous future: in both cases, it is a construct spun out of the political needs and anxieties of the present.

In attempting to account for that process whereby “Gothic,” often somewhat vaguely used in the eighteenth century to encompass a broad sense of the ancestral or the medieval past, eventually came to assume its modern literary-critical functions as a descriptor of a certain horrific and gruesome strain in fiction, Longueil has argued that fictions published in the wake of the second edition of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic story* in 1765 coupled their own renditions of “Gothic times” with a sub-Walpolean preoccupation with horror, terror and supernatural imaginings, to the extent that the latter set of meanings eventually came to exceed and replace the former (Longueil 1923). But before this moment, the connection between the pervasive “myth of Gothic origins” the early “Gothic” fictions of writers such as Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Francis Lathom, Isabella Kelly, W.H. Ireland, Eleanor Sleath, Regina Maria Roche, T.J. Horsley Curties, Charlotte Dacre and countless others seemed remote, if not entirely tenuous. As E.J. Clery has argued, fictions that we today designate as distinctly “Gothic” were neither conceived, designated, marketed nor reviewed in such terms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Clery 2002: 21); the most frequently recorded names for the mode used in the contemporary periodical press included, simply, “romance” or “modern romance,” “horrid novels” or “German tales,” “The Radcliffe school of novel writing,” “hobgobliana” and, most dismissively, “the trash of the circulating libraries.” And yet, it is through the recurrence of the familiar metaphor of “swarming” in Hannah More's archly conservative two-volume conduct-book, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), that one is afforded a rare glimpse of the connections between the political discourse of the Goths, on the one hand, and the particular brand of

supernatural fiction that we today call “the Gothic,” on the other. In a discussion of “The Effects of Influence” in the first volume of her *Strictures*, More turns to confront the “swarms” of modern romances that are disturbingly making their way from Europe onto British soil, the pernicious effects of which she calls upon all English women of sound mind and taste to resist:

They are called upon, therefore, to oppose with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other arms, are overrunning civilized society. Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans.

(More 1799: 1.39)

Via a rhetorical turn that is common in Britain of the 1790s, More looks to Germany as the source of the Gothic fictional aesthetic, figuring, in a subversion of the prevailing political ideology of the felicitous arrival of the Goths, the contemporary vogue for Gothic romance as an invasion by barbaric German nations. As she continues, continental fictions written in the tradition of Schiller “behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of ‘chaos and old night,’ by distorted and unprincipled compositions, which unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot, ‘Gorgons, and Hydras, and chimeras dire!’”; they “terrify the weak” and “disgust the discerning” with their “wild and mis-shapen superstitions,” for only those “who most earnestly deny the immortality of the soul are most eager to introduce the machinery of ghosts” (More 1799: 1.40). For More, the Gothic romance is a monstrous hybrid formed by the conjunction of non-neoclassical taste and depraved morality, swarming into Britain from both Germany and France with a fury that enacted the original invasion of the nation by the Barbarian Goths. Thus, by 1799, “Gothic” already served, in some senses, as a way of decrying a particular fictional aesthetic, one synonymous with the terrors, monstrosity, superstition and disgust invoked by More.

From an historical category to a political ideology to a term of aesthetic and stylistic description: of all the fields of relevance outlined so far, it is perhaps the signifier “Gothic” itself that has “swarmed” with the greatest insistence. Forever extending its remit, and continuously enlarging the realms of its critical purchase and applicability, the term “Gothic” has become as culturally ubiquitous as that which it is used to describe. Though once exclusively the preserve of a select group of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British politicians, historians and antiquaries, the term has substantially extended its semantic field so as to become one of the most important terms of aesthetic identification, classification and description in western cultural production of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As Alexander Warwick has noted, though, this process has not been without its perils, its critical over-application often amounting to little more than a vague sense of “feeling Gothicky” (Warwick 2007). For Nick Groom, similarly, the over-determination of the signifier suggests that “the Gothic now risks being emptied or nullified as a meaningful term” altogether (Groom 2012: xv). Originally the product

of a complex intercultural exchange between Britain, Germany and France in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the Gothic in its aesthetic dimensions has spread well beyond these European frontiers so as to become a thoroughly international, even globalized phenomenon (Byron 2012). While critics might remain divided as to its precise meanings, one aspect of the Gothic mode seems incontrovertible: encompassing fields as diverse as literature, politics, film, architecture, music, visual art, sartorial style and subcultural identity and more, the Gothic is nothing if not multidisciplinary. It is precisely to this, the inherently multidisciplinary nature of the mode, that *The Gothic World* seeks to respond, aiming to provide an overview of some of the most important forms and manifestations that the Gothic has enjoyed since the eighteenth century. Consisting of 42 new, specially-commissioned essays by upcoming and established scholars in the field, *The Gothic World* seeks, in line with recent critical impulses, to extend critical understandings of the Gothic well beyond the literary, and into such fields as film, politics, fashionable style, architecture, fine art and cyberculture.

THE GOTHIC WORLD: TIME, SPACE AND ACTION

Informed by the metaphor of the globe figured in its title, *The Gothic World* seeks to attest to the Gothic as a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional force, as a style, an aesthetic experience and a mode of cultural expression that traverses genres, forms, media, disciplines and national boundaries. Exploiting the spatial and temporal dimensions implied in the metaphor of the globe, the chapters in this collection are clustered and organized around five thematic parts: Gothic histories; Gothic spaces; Gothic readers and writers; Gothic spectacle; and Contemporary impulses, respectively. This structure, in itself, is not intended as a commitment to literary-historical coverage – a history of Gothic fiction from 1764 to the present day, via Victorianism and modernism. Neither is it intended as a means of exhaustive national coverage – the division of Gothic into so many regional varieties and traditions (Scottish; Irish; American; Mexican; Australian; Japanese), with each strain presided over by a number of canonical writers, literary texts and films. Rather, the structural approach adopted here, while informed by the dimensions of time, space and action, is one intended to draw critical attention to sites, topics and issues of particular interest and significance, some of them familiar to students and scholars of the Gothic, but others hitherto only cursorily considered. In addition to providing an overview of the field, each chapter also seeks to extend critical debates in new and engaging directions, thus providing as much a contribution to scholarship as a survey of existing work.

The chapters in Part I, “Gothic histories,” variously seek to address the deployment and circulation of “Gothic,” in both the political and the aesthetic meanings of that term, across a range of different historical or temporal contexts, including seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain (1; 2); post-revolutionary America (3); the Celtic peripheries of Scotland and Ireland and the eighteenth-century discourse of British nationalism (4; 5); the nineteenth-century colonial endeavor (6); and trauma-gripped post-9/11 America (7). It has become somewhat of a critical cliché, of course, to regard the Gothic as that which, at its most characteristic, conjures with the unbearable persistence of history, with a traumatic, painful and nightmarish past

that, however deep our wishes, will not simply disappear. In Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Jonathan Harker sums up this Gothic sense of time in two pithy sentences: "It is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill" (Stoker 1998: 67). And yet, as a modern Gothic fiction such as Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977) indicates, the persistence of the past involves far more than the heavy sense of burden that Harker's entry describes. King's novel, in fact, emblemizes at least three of the ways in which it might return: in the quick and unprovoked flashbacks of trauma and traumatic memory (Danny in relation to the Overlook hotel, Jack in relation to his father); evanescently in the form of a ghostly palimpsest or veil (Jack's reliving of the Masquerade Ball in the Colorado lounge); or through a relation of angry and violent possession (Jack's eventual succumbing to the evil forces in room 217). Gothic time works always in mysterious ways.

The chapters in Part II, "Gothic spaces," seek to focus critical attention upon specific spaces or sites of Gothic production from the eighteenth century to the present day, including the fanciful architectural constructions of some of Gothic fiction's earliest practitioners (8); the imaginative geographies of Romantic-era Gothic romance (9); the uncanny abodes and domiciles of Victorian England (10); the strange and unsettling landscapes of nineteenth-century America (11); the alienations of the modern city and its suburbs (12); and the haunted architectural formations of cyberspace (13). If there is such a thing as a poetics of Gothic space, it is certainly not the "felicitous space" that lies at the heart of Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958) – the sanguine spaces of childhood to which we fondly return in our memories, dreams and daydreams – but rather the "hostile spaces," such as those seen in the tales of Poe, that his study deliberately chooses to ignore (Bachelard 1994: xxxv-vi). For these are spaces in which the Gothic most characteristically deals: the spaces in which we have been hurt and wounded, but to which we obsessively return, the sites we remember in painful and horrific recollection, the spaces that return unwittingly *to us* in moments of lurid, traumatic recall.

Part III, "Gothic readers and writers," traces the long-standing investment of the Gothic aesthetic in the practice and experience of reading and writing, be that through locating its position within Romantic-era reading and publishing practices more generally (14; 15); outlining the primary literary forms in which it circulated across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; (17; 18; 23); tracing its relation to various forms of "recycling" and "retelling" (16; 19; 20); or through considering its age- and institution-defined readerly audiences across time (21; 22; 25; 26; 27). However, as far as Samuel Taylor Coleridge in that famous footnote in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) was concerned, the countless hours idly frittered away in the perusal of a Gothic romance were as remote from the active, "muscular" engagements of the ideal reading-experience as conceivably possible: "For as to the devotees of the circulating libraries, I dare not compliment their pass-time, or rather kill-time, with the name of reading. Call it rather a sort of beggarly day-dreaming during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness and a little mawkish sensibility" (Coleridge 1975: 28). Instead, Coleridge continued, the readers of Gothic were akin more to those passive, all-too-indolent audiences of the age's mass visual entertainment, the entire imagery of their vacant "doze" being "supplied *ab extra* by a sort of mental *camera obscura* manufactured at the printing office, which *pro*

tempore fixes, reflects and transmits the moving phantasms of one man's delirium, so as to people the barrenness of a hundred other brains afflicted with the same trance or suspension of all common sense and all definite purpose" (Coleridge 1975: 28). Although, as Jonathan Crary has argued, the camera obscura in the eighteenth century served as a guiding metaphor in the work of Leibniz, Descartes, Newton and Locke for rationalism and empiricism's accurate and truthful inferences about the world that the act of visual observation could provide, it remained invariably haunted by the spectral conjurations and ghostly illusions of the magic lantern show (Crary 1992: 33). Synonymous in the mind of Coleridge and other detractors with the phantasmagoric displays of the magic lantern show, the Gothic imagination is one of ghostly and ghostly spectacle.

Albeit not in these damning terms, the chapters in "Gothic spectacle," Part IV of this collection, seek to sketch out precisely the visual coordinates of the Gothic imagination foregrounded in Coleridge's critique, tracing, as they do so, its manifestations across eighteenth-century painting (28); nineteenth-century illustration (29); Gothic theatricality from the eighteenth century to the present (30); Victorian ghouls and monsters (31); early and contemporary horror cinema (32; 33; 34); and modern visual art (35). Tacitly sketched out here, perhaps, is a history of Gothic in and of visual culture that runs from the panoptical arrangements of Michel Foucault's modern discipline – the public spectacle of torture and punishment figured with such gruesome attention to detail in such early Gothic fictions as Lewis's *The Monk* and Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) – through a version of Guy Debord's "Society of the Spectacle" in Gothic fictions of the Victorian *fin de siècle* – the fetishizing of the images, trappings and commodities of the Life Beautiful in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), or the bourgeois dependence on the technologies of industrial modernity for the vanquishing of vampirism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – to the Baudrillardian world of simulation and simulacra figured in, say, Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) and Will Self's *Dorian: An Imitation* (2002), thoroughly Gothic worlds in which any sense of the "real" has been eclipsed and replaced by only so many simulations of already groundless images and signs (Foucault 1991; Debord 1983; Baudrillard 1994). Theoretically, the visual trajectory of Gothic production from the eighteenth century to the present is the movement from Foucault's panopticism, through Debord's spectacular consumerism, to the naturalized and forgotten spectacles of Baudrillardian simulation. Indeed, the relationship between Gothic and the culture of simulation becomes an ever-present concern in the chapters brought together in "Contemporary impulses," Part V of this collection, be that through the sonic simulation of ghosts (36); the simulated digital environments of Gothic gaming (38); the fictional and televisual reiterations of so many life-drained tropes (39; 41); the pursuit of the thrills and accoutrements of an already simulated "Gothic lifestyle" (37; 40); or a world that has been robbed of its "real" monsters altogether, but which remains all the more Gothic for it (42).

THE GOTHIC CHRONOTOPE

If the coordinates of time and space are the two structural principles and conceptual categories that are privileged across this collection, it is because, together, they lend

themselves as crucial elements in the definition of what might constitute a “Gothic” aesthetic. While, with the passage of time since the eighteenth century, the political meanings of the Gothic have become ever remote, and while, for all our economic and environmental anxieties, the world in which we currently live does not *actually* resemble the dark, apocalyptic Gothic worlds represented in *World War Z*, *The Road* or *The Passage*, the Gothic in twenty-first-century culture remains primarily a matter of stylistic and aesthetic concern, and one that countless critics and cultural commentators have sought to define. Few academic studies in the field, in fact, fail to advance a definition of the Gothic in their opening pages. But it is to Chris Baldick’s often-cited definition of the Gothic advanced in his “Introduction” to *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (1992) that we ought at this point to return, particularly if we are to recuperate for the term a critical function and utility in the face of what recent critics have identified as its over-application, its redundancy or even possible meaninglessness. “For the Gothic effect to be attained,” Baldick claims, “a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration” (Baldick 1993: xix). The Gothic effect, he argues, is constituted at that point of intersection between time and space, between “the tyranny of the past” (often in the form of a family curse, the survival of ancient despotisms and benighted superstitions) and “the dead-end of physical incarceration” (in such spaces as dungeons, the locked room or the family mansion at large) (Baldick 1993: xix). In its references to “effect,” and in its allusions to the “sickening descent into disintegration” that the Gothic text, at its most characteristic, is said to “produce,” Baldick’s definition ultimately relies upon a theory of spectator or readerly reaction, one that seems less useful when attempting to describe and define the Gothic beyond the vagaries of subjective emotional response.

Working within an earlier and different formalist tradition, Mikhail Bakhtin had made comparable recourse to the dimensions of time and space in his own approach to the problem of generic classification as early as 1937. Borrowing the term from Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, Bakhtin in the essay “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics” advanced the notion of the “chronotope” (literally, “space-time”) as a means of referring to “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Bakhtin 1981: 84). Taken to refer to the point of intersection between the temporal and spatial axes, that place at which the distinctions between the two dimensions become almost negligible, the chronotope for Bakhtin is a formally constitutive category of “generic significance” (Bakhtin 1981: 84) insofar as it lends to any literary mode its distinctiveness. In other words, the way in which any given literary genre organizes, arranges and distributes the elements of time and space internal to it is central to its self-constitution and critical definition as such. Ancient Greek romance, for instance, becomes in this way of thinking the genre that is formed at the point of fusion between a particular conceptualization of time (“in one and the same place”) and a particular representation of space (“in one and the same place”) (Bakhtin 1981: 97). By contrast, Bakhtin describes the chronotopic arrangement of time and space that is particular to the chivalric romance as “a *miraculous world in adventure-time*” (Bakhtin 1981: 154), the former referring to the magical

unreadable, unstable nature of the romance world and the latter to the numerous temporal interruptions, sudden occurrences and short, sequential adventures into which time in medieval romance is often divided.

Some of the other chronotopes considered by Bakhtin in the essay include the literary Idyll and the Rabelaisian novel: in each instance, generic peculiarity is said to lie in a particular manifestation of, and connections between, the coordinates of time and space. But it is when Bakhtin turns to consider the Gothic that the usefulness of his chronotopic approach becomes especially evident:

Toward the end of the seventeenth century [. . .] in England, a new territory for novelistic events is constituted and reinforced in the so-called “Gothic” or “black” novel – the *castle* (first used in this meaning by Horace Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto*, and later in Radcliffe, Monk Lewis and others). The castle is saturated through and through with a time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word, that is, the time of the historical past. The castle is the place where the lords of the feudal era lived (and consequently also the place of historical figures of the past); the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of architecture, in furnishings, weapons, the ancestral portrait gallery, the family archives and in the particular human relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. It is this quality that gives rise to the specific kind of narrative inherent in castles and that is then worked out in Gothic novels.

(Bakhtin 1981: 246)

The Gothic castle, in other words, is chronotopic insofar as it bears witness to an “organic cohesion of spatial and temporal aspects and categories” (Bakhtin 1981: 246): in addition to being the site in which much of the narrative action in early Gothic fiction occurs, the ruined Gothic pile is, itself, the spatial embodiment of historical time. Consequently, it is in this chronotopic structure that the singularity of the genre might be said to inhere, and extending Bakhtin’s mode of reasoning, we might thus define the early Gothic fictions of Walpole, Reeve, Lee, Radcliffe, Roche, Lewis, Maturin and others as “adventure-time in Gothic-architectural space”: “adventure-time” is the temporal schemas of the romance form, composed of so many digressions, interruptions, false turns and circuitous returns, and “Gothic-architectural space” the dark and gloomy interiors of the ruin, cathedral, monastery, labyrinth or dungeon in which this temporal schema is usually enacted. Adventure-time in Gothic-architectural space: Gothic writing is constituted at the place of intersection between these interrelated spatial and temporal coordinates.

Of course, to speak, as Bakhtin does, of a “Gothic genre” is also potentially to strap this, the most adaptive and mercurial of aesthetics, into a critical straight-jacket, reducing it to a standardized and somewhat predictable constellation of tropes and conventions. When one attempts to draw together two texts as historically remote and aesthetically diverse from one another as *The Castle of Otranto* and David Fincher’s horror film *Se7en* (1995), such an approach quickly reveals its shortcomings: here, not even the ghost, that apparently most stable and consistent of Gothic tropes, is capable of forging any common ground between them. And yet, they both remain in some ineffable sense quintessentially “Gothic.” As several critics

have thus argued, the Gothic is more a mode than a consistent, stable and formally recognizable genre, one that permeates several forms of cultural expression and one that continuously metamorphoses and reinvents itself across time. Its characteristics are seldom stable. But a chronotopic approach to the challenge of defining the Gothic aesthetic remains useful insofar as it provides a critical vocabulary for, and technical point of purchase upon, an otherwise rather nebulous sense of Baldick's "Gothic effect": "this poem, this novel, this painting, this film or this piece of music undoubtedly 'feels' Gothic or 'Gothicky', and we might put this feeling into words in the following way." The works of Walpole, Reeve, Lee, Radcliffe and Lewis are "Gothic," in other words, because they all give expression to the chronotope of "adventure-time in Gothic-architectural space."

Its applicability far exceeds the well-known fictions of the early tradition, too. Perhaps *Frankenstein's* major contribution to the Gothic was to employ the language of horror and terror beyond what by 1818 had become the mode's established chronotope: devoid of any prominent sense of architectural ruin, Mary Shelley also cuts the Gothic free of the historical past by setting her narrative in the more recent past of the eighteenth century. While for the most part maintaining the familiar elements of Gothic space, her parents William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft had effected similar temporal modifications to the Gothic chronotope in *Things as they Are: Or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) and *Maria: Or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) respectively: almost two centuries before Angela Carter made her famous declaration, Godwin, Wollstonecraft and other radical writers in the Jacobin tradition were of the conviction that they lived and wrote "in Gothic times." With *Frankenstein*, then, the Gothic chronotope is reconfigured as the spectacle of the monstrous body, as what we might term the "romance-time of monstrous corporeal space": though it is never represented in any detail in the course of Shelley's narrative, the image of the monster's body that the reader, in a chilling mirroring of the actions of Victor Frankenstein himself, pieces and stitches together from the shards of available description is one that rapidly took cultural hold. From *Frankenstein* onward, a particular strand of dramatic and literary Gothic would be given over to recounting the romance-fuelled adventures of deformed and Othered bodies, a tendency that persists in such nineteenth-century literary texts as Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Victorian Gothic, in fact, renders the architectural spaces of the earlier Gothic tradition considerably more capacious, daring to display the bodies of its inverts, degenerates, doubles and criminals in their sometimes secretive, sometimes bold perambulations across the urban spaces of the modern city. "Perverse adventure-time in urban space" might serve as its chronotopic description.

With the rise of cinema in the early twentieth century, the spectacular body becomes the stuff of the big screen: F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932); its post-Frankensteinian legacy continues in the spectacular corporeality of the modern horror film, from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), through Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) and Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), to the recent Saw franchise of "torture porn." In such modern and contemporary Gothic fictions as William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971), Stephen King's *Carrie* (1974), Iain Banks's *The Wasp*

Factory (1984), Thomas Harris's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988), Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love* (1989), Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) and John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let the Right One In* (2004), the spectacular body of the Other becomes ever more disgusting, threatening and abject. In film, it serves as ghastly spectacle in George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982), Wes Kraven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and Eli Roth's *Hostel* (2005), among countless others. At times, the spectacle is the body of the victim, at times the body of the monster / vampire / zombie / slasher / serial killer itself. Throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, though, the Gothic chronotope of old persists, in the "adventure-time in Gothic-architectural space" figured in a broad and diverse range of canonical Gothic fictions that includes, amongst others, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853), Henry James's shorter Gothic tales and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), the ghost stories of M.R. James, Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1911), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* Trilogy (1946–59), Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Sarah Waters's *The Little Stranger* (2009), Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) and Carlos Ruiz Zafón's *The Shadow of the Wind* (2001). Filmically, it endures in such titles as Robert Wise's *The Haunting* (1964), Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others* (2001), David Fincher's *Panic Room* (2002), Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Orphanage* (2007) and James Watkins's recent *The Woman in Black* (2012). As such, the chronotope of the early Gothic tradition remains, to date, the most dominant, even within a contemporary context in which the Gothic has been subject to such widespread appropriation and diffusion across the entire panoply of cultural forms and media.

What, though, of the slew of recent Gothic texts the likes of those discussed at the start of this Introduction? How do contemporary fictions such as *World War Z*, *The Road* and *The Passage* relate to the enduring Gothic chronotope of "adventure-time in Gothic-architectural space"? None of them contains any pervasive sense of architectural structure, and the action that does occur in their laboratories, wastelands, offices, boardrooms, cyber-worlds and ruined cityscapes across the globe is not always of the order of "adventure." Perhaps what we are witnessing here, in our own "Gothic World" of the twenty-first century, is the instantiation of another Gothic chronotope, new in that it is inflected with current socio-economic anxieties but old insofar as it marks a return to swarming, the dominant metaphors of the Gothic from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Metaphors of swarming, to be sure, recur throughout modern and contemporary Gothic writing: in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let me Go* (2005), the monstrous clones persistently "swarm" around Madam when they try to gauge her fear of them; in Adam Nevill's *Apartment 16* (2010), Seth describes what he senses on the eighth floor of the old house as "an active energy. A kind of swarming, bustling sensation in the air, as if the presence of former activity was locked in place and unable to escape" (Nevill 2010: 45). But, more than this, contemporary Gothic production, with all its apocalyptic economic and environmental fears, in all its concerns with global terrorism and its anxieties concerning technology and the advent of a monstrous, post-human future, might

chronotopically be described as “swarming-time in global space,” as vampires and viruses, clones and cyborgs, zombies and other aberrant beings swarm the globe with regard for neither nation, politics nor human identity. Deterritorialized, mobile and ever-more ferocious, these are the Gothic figures that insistently swarm, invading all forms of contemporary cultural production with the violence of their ancient forebears.

REFERENCES

- Aikin, J. (1777) *A Treatise on the Situation, Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany; and the Life of Agricola*; By C. Cornelius Tacitus, trans. J. Aikin, London.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: notes toward a historical poetics,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson, Austin: University of Texas Press, 84–258.
- Baldick, C. (ed.) (1993) *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1994) *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1981, trans. S.F. Glaser, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Brooks, M. (2006) *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.
- Bachelard, G. (1994) *The Poetics of Space*, 1958, trans. M. Jolas, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Byron, G. (2012) “Global Gothic,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford, Blackwell, 369–78.
- Clery, E.J. (2002) “The genesis of ‘Gothic’ fiction,” in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21–39.
- Coleridge, S.T. (1975) *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, London: J.M. Dent.
- Crary, J. (1992) *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Cronin, J. (2010) *The Passage*, London: Orion.
- (2012) *The Twelve*, London: Orion.
- Debord, G. (1983) *Society of the Spectacle*, 1967, Detroit: Black & Red.
- Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1975, trans. A. Sheridan, London: Penguin.
- Groom, N. (2012) *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kliger, S. (1952) *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Longueil, A.E. (1923) “The Word ‘Gothic’ in Eighteenth Century Criticism,” *Modern Language Notes*, 38.8: 453–60.
- Madoff, M. (1979) “The Useful Myth of Gothic Ancestry,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 8: 337–50.
- Mallet, P.H. (1770) *Northern Antiquities: Or, A Description of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws of the Ancient Danes, and Other Northern Nations*, trans. T. Percy, 2 vols, London.
- McCarthy, C. (2007) *The Road*, London: Picador.
- Michaud, M. (2009) *Republicanism and the American Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- More, H. (1799) *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols, London.

- Pinkerton, J. (1787) *A Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths. Being an Introduction to the Ancient and Modern History of Europe*, London.
- (1789) *An Enquiry Into the History of Scotland, Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III or the Year 1056. Including the Authentic History of that Period*, 2 vols, London.
- Nevill, A. (2010) *Apartment 16*, London: Pan Books.
- Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.stir.ac.uk/>> (accessed January 6, 2013).
- Quiggin, J. (2010) *Zombie Economics: How Dead Ideas Still Walk Among Us*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, R.J. (1987) *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688–1863*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stoker, B. (1998) *Dracula*, 1897, ed. G. Byron, Peterborough, ON: Broadview.
- Temple, W. (1695) *An Introduction to the History of England*, London.
- Thomson, J. (1766) *The Works of James Thomson*, 4 vols, London.
- Warwick, A. (2007) “Feeling Gothicky?,” *Gothic Studies*, 9.1: 5–15.

PART I

GOTHIC HISTORIES



This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICS OF GOTHIC HISTORIOGRAPHY, 1660–1800



Sean Silver

The Gothic did not begin as the kaleidoscopic category that it has become. It did not refer to the occult, the macabre, or the supernatural; it was not a genre of horror-driven art, a subgenre of rock music, a style of soaring architecture, or a post-punk subculture with its own recognizable fashion. Nor did it mean, simply, “of or pertaining to the Goths” – the fourth-century civilization in upper Germania – or even, more loosely, “medieval,” “antique,” or “barbaric.” In its original acceptance, the Gothic referred to a partly misremembered, partly manufactured, yet still historically potent myth of origins for the balanced model of English politics. During the century following the 1660 Restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the English throne, the Gothic, in its most important English language usage, emerged as the word that summarized a particular form of constitutional politics. It referred to a way of conceptualizing the present as the legacy of a mythologized past, a way, that is, of imagining history. We might say, then, that the Gothic did not begin as anything at all, for its ultimate origins are lost in a loose mix of myth and mystified national causes.

How the Gothic got here, from there, from a politics to an aesthetics, hinges first on the work of one man, the author of what we have now come to call the first Gothic novel. This author is Horace Walpole, who condensed a lifelong interest in the objects of the past into a hasty proto-novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). The initial inspiration was a dream, a medieval dream of the supernatural, but the tale’s obsessions and major themes are with the Gothic way of telling history. As unlikely as it may seem, then, Gothic historiography, the writing of English history as Gothic history, is the common stem that has blossomed into the word’s many modern applications. A mainstream, politically-motivated way of thinking about the past has proliferated into a distinct form of fiction, a sort of music, a category of revival architecture and, more generally, a decidedly counter-cultural lifestyle and aesthetic.

THE POLITICAL ORIGINS OF THE GOTHIC

The story of the Gothic starts with an absence. The critical fact of English politics, driving centuries of tense consensus punctuated by violence, is its lack of a

foundational document. British law has no firm beginning to which to point, no original charter which, like Roman law, is etched in stone, and certainly no constitution in the sense that Americans use the word today. The Magna Carta, often referred to in discussions of the English constitution, is an outsized agreement to abide by precedent, and therefore itself stands on the statute books, rather than the other way around. Likewise, the monarch's authority flows from no primitive contract; instead, it stands upon an imposing precedent and the rule of custom. By the seventeenth century, the King could point to nearly six hundred years' worth of lineage; he belonged to a long, admittedly complicated line of authority stemming from William I, the first Norman King of England. When William the Conqueror defeated the Anglo-Saxon King Harold at Hastings in 1066, he forged by force of arms a title to the throne and to centralized, executive power. Upon assuming the role of supreme head of the church in 1534, King Henry VIII additionally united sacred to secular supremacy, adding to the weight of precedent the doctrine of the divine right of rule. The Tudor and Stuart dynasties thereafter wielded a nearly unchallengeable justification for political power, even in the absence of any contract initiating this legal and political tradition.

The Gothic first emerged as a political category during the long and ruinous Civil War (1642–49), which pitted the largely Puritan, commercially inclined Parliament against the centralized government of king and court. In 1616, King James I published (in a revised edition) what was perhaps the strongest statement of the monarch's own inalienable rights; the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* posed a strong version of the divine theory of rule, sketching a broad justification of power which was vigorously pursued by his son, King Charles I. Nathaniel Bacon, during a life that crossed statecraft and political philosophy, established himself as an active parliamentarian, becoming one of the chief mouthpieces in the argument for republican government. Bacon had no interest in overthrowing the doctrine of the divine right of rule, whereby political authority descends ultimately from divine providence. His *An Historical Discourse on the Uniformity of Government in England* (1647–51) argues instead for representative government as a component branch under the general rubric of divine right. "The utmost perfection of this nether world's best government," Bacon insists, "consists in the upholding of a due proportion of severall interests compounded into one temperature" (Bacon 1647: np). Thus envisioned, the republican parliament tempers the king's will and pleasure, just as the king's single voice and vested authority restrains the state from lapsing into a chaos of competing interests. This sounds reasonable, but it was nevertheless treasonous: according to Bacon's argument, the "Uniformity" of English government would not flow from a single person – that is, the king – but from the dynamic tension emerging out of the constantly shifting, generally opposed interests of Parliament and court (see Pocock 1957).

Against King James's weighty appeal to tradition, what Bacon called his "Arbitrary rule over English Subjects" (Bacon 1647), Bacon sought to identify an ideological counterweight, a tradition of representative rule that could justify the parliamentarian side in the Civil War. The King could point to 600 years of rule, stemming from the Norman King William; Bacon's *Historical Discourse* identified a much older tradition of distributed power, originating ultimately in the government by assembly practiced amongst the northern tribes of Europe. The first of these tribes

to appear on the English scene, according to Bacon's argument, was the Saxons, who mingled and married with the Britons following the fifth-century withdrawal of the Roman Empire. To them, Bacon ascribes what would become traditional: the division of "their Country . . . into Counties or Circuits," the "election of [their] Princes . . . by the general assembly" (the "wittagenmote") and the "worship of an invisible and an infinite Deity" (Bacon 1647: 14–15, 58). With their suspiciously English institutions, the Saxons therefore provided a plausible tradition for the recognizable features of English government; like the English, the Saxons boasted distributed legal authority and government by a parliament of freeholders, both of which were nevertheless compatible with a monotheistic church. When Bacon mentions the Saxons, then, it is clear that he is also talking about the parliamentary side in the Civil War; each is called "a free people," Bacon insists, "because they are a Law to themselves" (Bacon 1647: 15).

If the story ended here, however, Neil Gaiman and Anne Rice would be shelved in the Saxon section, and bands like Joy Division and The Cure would have inaugurated a new wave of music called Sax Rock. But the very immemoriality of Saxon political custom called for a more mythic origin, a deeper wellspring of traditional causes. "The Saxons," writes Bacon, "were in name our first matter," that is, our "first mater" or "mother," yet it was "not they onely," for "they having once made the breach open, and entered this Island," they were followed by "those Eastern peoples of the Angles, Danes, Almaines, and Goths" (Bacon 1647: 96). Among these, the "Angles" offered to England their name: the Angles becoming the "Engl-" of "England." The "Goths" offered something more. The "Saxon King," Bacon writes, himself received them "as sworn brethren, kinsmen, and proper Citizens of this Common-weale" (Bacon 1647: 96), because they brought with them the perfection of certain critical laws of government and primogeniture. Later commentators would go further, ascribing to the Goths themselves the strong set of republican laws only later adopted by the Saxon commonwealth. But the outlines of the narrative were already clear: the English government would henceforth be Gothic in origin, the Gothic influence on Anglo-Saxon political tradition accounting for England's uniquely mixed mode of government. "Nor can any Nation upon earth," Bacon concludes, "shew so much of the ancient Gothique law as this Island hath" (Bacon 1647: 96).

Though Bacon did not invent this narrative, ascribing it instead to remarks by Julius Caesar and Cornelius Tacitus, the Gothic would eventually come to serve as the traditional source of republican institutions, a site where a scholar tracing the history of British custom might plausibly pause before plunging into time immemorial. If the line of English kings could be traced all the way back to William the Conqueror, Parliament, as a native institution, could be traced back much farther, indeed to the very people that William defeated at Hastings in the first place. Because of the priority it assumed, the Gothic thereafter became a standard part of British history, figuring in such politically-motivated tracts as James Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), Henry Neville's *Plato Redivivus* (1681), Algernon Sidney's *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698, published posthumously), and the anonymous *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* (1709). By 1716, statesman and essayist Joseph Addison might archly remark of "an old Justice of Peace who lives in the Neighbourhood, and will talk you from Morning till Night on the *Gothic* Balance"

(Addison 1716: 53). By the middle of the century, even Viscount Bolingbroke, a Tory statesman so conservative he would end up in exile during Robert Walpole's Whig administration, might celebrate "The Freedom of our Gothic Institution of Government . . . transmitted down from our *Saxon Ancestors*" (Bolingbroke 1735: 102). The Gothic began as an appeal for radical parliamentarians, but would come to be used by Whig and Tory alike, strange bedfellows united by their appeal to the past as a guide for the political present.

For good and ill, then, the Gothic way of telling history would prove to be an important early component in the development of the modern British nation-state. It was the first experiment in what would emerge as a necessary precondition for the nation generally as, in Benedict Anderson's terms, "new-emerging nations imagined themselves antique" (Anderson 1991: xiv; see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Chapter 5 of this volume). It is not just that the Gothic historically explained the British constitution, providing a genealogical story for a whole community, and an explanation for what sets it apart from others. It is what guaranteed, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, the exceptionalism of British culture, anchoring a community as much by ethnicity as by a shared way of being in the world, a shared commitment to a set of inherited values. This, then, is where the Gothic began: as a way of anchoring British parliamentary politics.

STADIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE GOTHIC AESTHETIC

By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, Gothic historiography would be swept up in an even more ambitious historiographic mode. Abandoning the traditional interest in the actions of great men and moral exemplars, early modern historians began the more ambitious task of recapturing the narratives of whole societies, including the patterns in which civilizations might be thought to develop. The so-called stadial model of history, developed largely among the university culture of Scotland, proposes a set of natural laws guiding the development of civilizations. According to this theory, every civilization will inevitably follow the same set of more-or-less universal stages: from the hunter-gatherer phase, a civilization will develop into the pastoral-agricultural, the feudal, and, eventually, the modern-commercial, one predictable phase giving way to the predictable next (Berry 1997; Pocock 1999; Phillips 2000). An analysis of the sources of production would therefore be expected naturally to suggest a set of legal institutions, habits and literary and artistic forms. Each age implied an entire way of being in the world: a cultural consciousness, a general aesthetics, a politics.

The place of the Gothic in stadial historiography is most clearly articulated by Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). Hurd was an English divine, who would become a bishop, but in the years during which he composed his popular *Letters*, he was a translator and theological writer toiling in obscurity in London. The *Letters*, which in some ways were unlike anything else he wrote, were nevertheless destined to become his most popular achievement, setting the tone for what the Gothic would become. They aim to explain two things: the rise of chivalry as a system of manners, and the aesthetic of the romance as the major art form of the late-medieval and early-Renaissance eras. Each of these, as Hurd understands it, is

routed through the Gothic, for the same Gothic system of government that gave rise to the British brand of liberty also gave rise to the arts and decorum of the chivalric romance.

The system of manners known as chivalry, Hurd writes, “seems to have sprung immediately out of the Feudal Constitution” (Hurd 1762: 7). This constitution, which directly expressed the Gothic tradition of distributed government, put power in the hands of local barons and freeholders. The central paradox of the Gothic system as understood by Bacon – that a stable system could emerge as the articulation of differences (Pocock 1957) – would become, for Hurd, the defining feature of the Gothic tradition in culture and the arts. Because of the continual political tension between autonomous freeholders, the continual skirmishes and border conflicts which arose between them, soldiers would “go in quest of adventures” (Hurd 1762: 14), which Hurd understands to be a kind of patrolling; the quest narrative might be seen as a natural outcome of the perpetual struggle between small communities of relatively autonomous barons. Hence, too, a system of “Justs and Turnaments” would naturally follow, as a way of maintaining “the military discipline of their followers” (Hurd 1762: 9). “Courtesy, affability, and gallantry” might emerge as a necessary consequence of the neo-urban castle complexes in which men and women were forced to live (Hurd 1762: 15). Even “the free commerce of the ladies,” and the “gallantry” evinced by men, could be welded into a political interpretation of Gothic feudalism; “violations of chastity being the most atrocious crimes they had to charge their enemies,” Hurd supposes, “they would pride themselves in the glory of being its protectors” (Hurd 1762: 17–18). Chivalry, as a martial tradition and a system of manners, was therefore “no absurd and freakish institution, but the natural and even sober effect of the feudal policy” (Hurd 1762: 9), that is, of the Gothic distribution of power.

Liberated from the exemplary model of history – history as the story of great men – amateur and professional historians alike turned to the Gothic as the opportunity for all sorts of cultural narratives. Among other things, the new historiography enabled the expansion of political histories from the narrow stories of the holders of high office to more general considerations of the conditions of day-to-day life for the politically active population at large. Gothic chivalry, for instance, offered a pre-history of politeness, part of the story of a general civilizing process from barbarity to the development of modern, British modes of political debate. Perhaps more important was a vibrant tradition of female historiography, histories by and about women, emerging alongside and under the banner of the Gothic. While past histories might view the state of women as a kind of gauge or index of the progress of civilization, eighteenth-century histories would henceforth identify women both as keepers of the civilizing influence of manners generally, and, more ambitiously, as movers of culture and politics in particular. The Gothic past, imagined and real, provided a number of such examples, not least of which were Gothic and Saxon women who, historians argued, occupied important martial and political offices (see O’Brien 2009).

Hurd’s account has an additional beast in view. Under Hurd’s pen, Gothic historiography, the Gothic tradition in England, implies an aesthetic. When Hurd was composing his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, the style that prevailed in fashionable England was based on a neo-Aristotelian preference for order, regularity and

stately symmetry. This style, variously called Grecian, Roman and classical, came to be associated with centralized power, especially in the offices of the increasingly bureaucratized British government. Scholars and collectors of antiquity noted, however, a vibrant tradition in Europe and Britain, fully coherent as a style but lacking this classical symmetry. This aesthetic described the medieval castle, which, according to the peculiar accretive logic of siege architecture, displayed centuries of outworks, adaptations and defensive innovations. It also described the soaring, enclosed spaces of the medieval cathedral, overlaid with the patina and pastiche of generations of worshippers living, dying and buried there. As a general articulation of a distributed, more democratically equal system of power, the Gothic emerged as a revived alternative to the art, architecture and even literary genres of centralized monarchy. “When an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian [that is, neo-classical] rules,” writes Richard Hurd, “he finds nothing but deformity. But the Gothic architecture has it’s [*sic*] own rules,” a “unity resulting from the respect which a number of related actions have to one common purpose” (Hurd 1762: 61, 66). This paradoxical twist is, of course, the familiar signature of the Gothic: the uniformity arising from diversity, the various interests compounded into one temperature. From the political to the aesthetic, the route could be surprisingly direct; as Horace Walpole concisely put it, “the Grecian is only proper for magnificent and public buildings”; the Gothic, on the contrary, is marked by its “variety,” its “charming irregularity,” and, in short, by its “liberty of taste” (Lewis 1960: 127).

The particularly British, anachronistically modern aesthetic that justified Gothic architecture also justified the medieval romance, which tended toward the quixotic, open-ended, episodic form of the quest. Each recaptures the Gothic political tradition’s core ideal of liberty, echoes its etiological narratives, and rediscovers its fundamental paradoxes, not least that it continually combines the wildest diversity, including even the supernatural, around a focused set of aesthetic ends. While the romance rose to prominence during the Italian Renaissance, the characteristic qualities of the romance quest, writes Hurd’s contemporary Thomas Percy, might be “discovered as in embryo in the customs, manners, and opinions of every branch of [the Goths]” (Percy 1767: 3). Beginning with Ariosto and Tasso, Goths anyway by association with that tribe’s post-Roman expansion into Italy, “our old romances of chivalry,” Percy writes, “may be derived in a lineal descent from the ancient historical songs of the Gothic bards and scalds” (Percy 1767: 3). Romance, by this logic, would turn out to be a particularly British tradition, for the literary innovations developed among the Italian poets would be passed, in a Gothic line of descent, to the English poets Edmund Spenser and John Milton. The great epics of England, just like the songs and romances unearthed and recirculated by eighteenth-century antiquarians, were to be experienced as a cultural inheritance marking England as the contemporary bastion of Gothic liberty. The aesthetic work (of a political category) is clearly once again political: Percy might celebrate England as the unique place where the Gothic tradition of liberty could blossom once again into song.

GOTHIC MODERNITY

In eighteenth-century Britain, then, the past age of the Gothic medieval meant more than a mere rhetorical gesture or political resource at the highest levels of

government. It was a reservoir for contemporary action and for political identification in day-to-day life: a repertoire of gestures, habits, materials, expressions, and tendencies which turned up continually, anachronistically, long after their proper time. Joseph Roach invites us to think of the eighteenth century as the paradigmatic moment of “deep” time, the present as the “percolation” of the past from the vast aquifer of history (Roach 2010); the Gothic is the possibly paradigmatic articulation of that tendency, of the tendency of the past to turn up continually in the present. The very survival in the eighteenth century of post-chivalric “gallantry” is one sign of the deepness of time, but the pervasiveness of the Gothic was much broader than this. The British landscape was, after all, littered with debris from its own medieval past; plows turned up burial urns; villagers repeated in ballads the relics of ancient poetry. The British subject lived among fragments of the Gothic on a daily basis.

British law itself, the custom-based “law of the land,” remained vitally important in the day-to-day lives of British subjects even while it pointed continually to a dimly remembered, multiply reconstructed past. This is to say that the politics of Gothic historiography diffused themselves across important aspects of the ordinary experiences of British citizens. “We inherit,” argues eighteenth-century legal theorist William Blackstone, a constitution of “fictions and circuities,” an ancient constitution which is itself

an old Gothic castle, erected in the days of chivalry, but fitted up for a modern inhabitant. The moated ramparts, the embattled towers, and the trophied halls, are magnificent and venerable, but useless. The interior apartments, now converted into rooms of convenience, are chearful and commodious, though their approaches are winding and difficult.

(Blackstone 1765–69: 3.17)

The Gothic was, consciously or not, continually re-enacted and renewed in the present; it was a way of living through the past, of carving out ways of being within the foreign cultural architecture of a native national history. The placid moment of the Gothic present conceals a limitless depth of custom. This history provides the stability of continuity. It also threatens continually to erupt into the present – whether anyone wants it or not. This tension, the tension that marks the presence of the Gothic, therefore predictably provides what emerges as the genre’s fundamental formal feature. “No other form of writing is as insistent as the Gothic,” Jerrold Hogle reminds us, “on juxtaposing potential revolution and possible reaction,” present and past, surface and depth, generic and fantastic (Hogle 2007: 13).

It is worth pausing to remember what the Gothic story of English origins forgets. This is not least because, as we know from countless reworkings of the Gothic project in the plot of the Gothic novel, no inconvenient truth ever stays forgotten: the Gothic mode itself guarantees the return of such truths. For one thing, Gothic myth anchored a fantasy of liberty that neglected anyone who was not a freeholder, including the masses of disenfranchised British men and women, agricultural leaseholders or wage-laborers who in the end had no representation under the Gothic system of government. Despite its claims regarding the veneration

of women, it perpetuated an asymmetrical relationship between men and women; as John Stuart Mill would much later observe, “it may be permitted to doubt whether the fopperies [of chivalric gallantry] contributed much to the substantial happiness of women, or indicated any real solicitude for their welfare” (Mill 1826: 94–95). Even more significantly, the Gothic story of Britain as a culture ethnically uninflected by anything outside of Northern Europe categorically ignores the dark facts of empire (Doyle 2008). The rhetoric of Gothic liberty erases the often-violent extension of British power, the perpetuation of draconian systems of property laws, and the impressment or forced servitude of the men and women of Britain to fuel the machine of imperial expansion. A Gothic history threatens perpetually to descend into a theory of racial superiority (Kidd 1993: 247–53; and Chapter 4 this volume); this is the case, for instance, of John Pinkerton’s late and enormously controversial *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (1787). It masks the British participation in the buying and selling of Africans as slaves, a commerce which Britain dominated after defeating Spain in 1713. Partly through the popularity of Paul de Rapin’s *L’histoire d’Angleterre* (1724), which advanced a Gothic history of Anglophone culture, the stadial theory of history could in fact *justify* slavery by posing slavery as the natural intersection of societies at very different phases of development (Kaufmann 2004). Finally, by no means did everyone agree that the British constitution was Gothic in origin. James Thomson, a Scottish poet whose *Liberty* (1734–36) was among the most popular in a genre celebrating British character, generally means “Gothic” as a synonym for “barbaric,” tending to refer the special mixed quality of the British constitution to the meliorating leadership of Kings Edward and Henry IV. David Hume, the Scottish scholar whose *History of England* (1754–61) became a standard resource, was likewise comfortable discussing the virtues of what he called Britain’s Gothic constitution, while remaining skeptical that the Gothic tribes themselves had actually supplied much more than a history of bloodshed and ignorance.

In fact, it is partly because of the way that political historiography papers over the controversial past that the Gothic, as a counter-historical mode, re-emerged as a lasting resource. The Gothic began as a counter-historical political mode, and though the story it told slipped into normativity, its oppositional form has persistent force. Horace Walpole’s name has already turned up several times in this account; he was the proponent of the Gothic as an aesthetic of liberty, the author of *The Castle of Otranto*, and, not-at-all coincidentally, son of the same Robert Walpole who drove Bolingbroke into exile. He was a dilettante and a polymath, a belletrist of enormous ambition who sought to pen a history of his time entirely through letters to his friends and colleagues. He built a house in the neo-Gothic style, the style he admired for its “liberty of taste”; this is the rambling villa he called Strawberry Hill, which still stands in the London suburb of Twickenham. He compiled an enormous collection of Gothic antiquities, with which he stuffed his neo-Gothic house. He pursued a history, based largely on Gothic documents and material fragments, that sought to rescue King Richard III from what he took to be Tudor propaganda. It is not all that he is known for, but Walpole’s long and productive life adumbrated the major themes of the Gothic, especially as it tended toward the overthrow of power in the name of the especially British form of liberty.

Walpole's only extended fictional prose narrative, published two years after Hurd's *Letters*, provides the major hinge between Gothic historiography and the first use of the Gothic in its modern acceptation. Romantic-era author Sir Walter Scott, whose *Ivanhoe* (1820) itself recapitulates the politics of Gothic historiography, cemented Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* as the source of the Gothic genre, providing both a modern way of telling historical romance, and the name it still bears. We are ready to see, however, that Walpole himself was merely working within and against a rich way of thinking about the past. *The Castle of Otranto*, subtitled (in its second edition of 1765) "A Gothic story," takes its name immediately from its setting. It is set in medieval Italy, in an area settled by the Goths after the Roman occupation. But the novel takes its major themes from the rich network of associations clustered around the Gothic as Walpole understood it: as a liberty of effects, as a way of telling a story, and, especially, as a way of articulating present and past.

The narrative turns on the House of Manfred, the dynasty of the tyrant-prince of Otranto who is prince because of an ancient regicide, the murder, generations previously, of the martyr-king Alfonso the Good. The tale opens when a young man named Theodore arrives in Otranto, instantly becoming popular both with the people of Otranto and the women of the court. Though he is the rightful heir to the throne, he himself believes that he is a peasant, and, because the official history insists that no claimant to the throne exists, everybody else believes he is a peasant, too. Put differently, Manfred's rule is justified by generations of precedent, and a political mode of history that obscures an ancient act of violence. The plot of the story is not precipitated, then, by politics in the present. It is kicked off, instead, by the emergence of a series of portents, relics and documents welling up from the buried past. The first of these is a giant helmet that looks precisely like the head of a statue of Alfonso. Later, a portrait comes to life, massive pieces of armor appear unexpectedly in the twists and turns of the castle, a giant scimitar appears with an encoded message, a skeleton in a monk's cowl drifts through secret passages. Each of these points, more unambiguously than the last, to the act of violence that the official history obscures. What begins as the story of a prince perpetuating a historiographically legitimized dynasty becomes instead the story of a helmet, a portrait, a suit of armor, an unearthed sword and a skeleton from the closet. These are the revenants of the untellable past, the elements of the Gothic. People do not so much write or rewrite history as the objects of history themselves step in, sometimes literally, to repair the traumas of the present. In the end, a popular (though unwilling) prince, with the legitimation of a greater precedent than the tyrant-prince he replaces, will assume the throne of Otranto.

The special case of the Gothic as a resource against the polemics of kings and magistrates becomes, under Walpole's able pen, the general contest between the everyday and the erupting occult. *The Castle of Otranto* therefore provides, according to more than one account, the first major step in the rise of supernatural fiction, in what would become the Gothic. It is episodic; it is interested in the roles of women; it concerns the actions of ordinary people under extraordinary circumstances; it remarks on the contest of manners (between the gentle Theodore and the vicious Manfred); and it poses a contest between a tyrant and a tradition of popular kingship, the line of Manfred against the line of Alfonso the Good. It stages the

documented claims of the current order against a much older, vanquished order of being. Finally, most importantly, *The Castle of Otranto* signals the beginnings of what we know as the Gothic not as a moment of something new, but as the turning-up of something immemorially old, an irruption figured as the supernatural, or, if you like, the return of the repressed. In its beginning, and in ways that echo in its continuing influence, the Gothic articulates a deep sense of the past as an ineluctable, inconvenient, possibly unwanted, but nevertheless abiding element of the present. In *The Castle of Otranto*, the general contours of the Gothic are therefore already clear: it is a political, historiographic mode emerging as a way of being in the present, the experience of modernity as continually routed through and ruptured by the past.

REFERENCES

- Addison, J. (1716) *The Freeholder; or Political Essays*, London.
- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983, London: Verso.
- Bacon, N. (1647) *An Historical Discourse of the Uniformity of the Government of England*, London.
- Berry, C.J. (1997) *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Blackstone, W. (1765–69) *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bolingbroke, Viscount H. (1735) *A Dissertation Upon Parties*, Dublin.
- Doyle, L. (2008) *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity: 1640–1940*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T.O. (eds) (1983) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hogle, J.E. (2007) “Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture,” in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–20.
- Hurd, R. (1762) *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, London.
- Kaufmann, E.P. (2004) *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kidd, C. (1993) *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689–c.1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 247–53.
- (1999) *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, W.S. (ed.) (1960) *The Yale Editions of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, Volume 20: with Sir Horace Mann*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- Mill, J.S. (1826) “Modern French Historical Works,” *Westminster Review*, 6: 62–103.
- O'Brien, K. (2009) *Women and the Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Percy, T. (1767) “On the Ancient Metrical Romances,” in *Four Essays: as Improved and Enlarged in the Second Edition of the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, London, 62–93.
- Phillips, M.S. (2000) *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Pocock, J.G.A. (1957) *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1999) *Barbarism and Religion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roach, J. (2010) “Performance: The Blunders of Orpheus,” *PMLA*, 125.4: 1078–86.
- Walpole, H. (1764) *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic story*, London.

FURTHER READING

- Clery, E.J. (1995) *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction: 1762–1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Charts the invention of Gothic fiction in the age of Enlightenment, especially as it develops alongside contemporary social, political and economic issues.)
- Kliger, S. (1952) *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (The pioneering and still-essential study of the Gothic as a political, rhetorical category.)
- Kudrycz, W. (2011) *The Historical Present: Medievalism and Modernity*, London: Continuum, 1–34. (Analyzes the idea of the medieval as it operates in modern culture, touching usefully on the historiographic category of the Gothic.)
- Madoff, M. (1979) “The Useful Myth of Gothic Ancestry,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 8: 337–50. (Discusses the development of the Gothic in early modern culture as a useful parliamentary myth of origins.)
- McCarthy, M. (1987) *The Origins of the Gothic Revival*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1–86. (Describes the rise of the neo-Gothic aesthetic in literature, architecture, and the arts, beginning with the eighteenth-century interest in antiquity.)
- Miles, R. (2003) “The Gothic and Ideology,” in D.L. Hoeveler and T. Heller (eds) *Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions*, New York: MLA, 58–65. (Argues that the fantastical, spectral figures of the Gothic develop as signs and cyphers of social and political realities.)
- Price, F. (2011) “Ancient Liberties? Rewriting the Historical Novel: Thomas Leland, Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34.1: 19–38. (Pace Lukács, develops a pre-history of the historical novel in three fictional-political experiments, arguing for the Gothic as a parallel tradition fully as vibrant as that later exemplified by Walter Scott.)
- Samson, J. (1986) “Politics Gothicized: The Conway Incident and *The Castle of Otranto*,” *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 10: 145–58. (Usefully positions the first Gothic novel against a contemporary political scandal in which Walpole was interested.)
- Silver, S.R. (2009) “Visiting Strawberry Hill: Horace Walpole’s Gothic Historiography,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 21.4: 535–64. (A reassessment of the villa and its contents)
- Smith, R.J. (1987) *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688–1863*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A difficult but essential study of the legacy of medieval legal and political thought in long eighteenth-century Britain.)
- Ward, L. (2007) “Montesquieu on Federalism and Anglo-Gothic Constitutionalism,” *Publius*, 37.4: 551–77. (Discusses the cross-channel negotiations of constitutional thought between Montesquieu, British constitutionalism, and the Gallic feudal tradition.)

- Watt, J. (2004) *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre, and Cultural Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 12–41. (An important study of the Gothic as genre fiction especially in the minor literature of the late eighteenth century.)
- Wein, T. (2002) *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764–1824*, New York: Palgrave, 49–69. (Positions the rise of the Gothic against the parallel development of nationalism, arguing for the importance of the Gothic’s particular sensitivity to the past in the production of a sense of national character.)
- Wormuth, F.D. (1949) *The Origins of Modern Constitutionalism*, New York: Harper Brothers. (A long history of the instruments of government that begins with the Greek notion of law and ends with the Gothic tradition in Britain.)

CHAPTER TWO

GOTHIC ANTIQUARIANISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



Rosemary Sweet

Much of this volume is concerned with the richly varied output of the literary Gothic which is now a well-established genre. In the eighteenth century, however, the literary Gothic was never more than a small, if highly influential, sub-genre, and the term “Gothic” had acquired none of the connotations which would be subsequently derived from association with literature, art and film. But it is important to remember that the literary Gothic did not emerge *ex nihilo*; rather it drew on well-established cultural meanings and a long-standing interest in the Gothic which were developed largely within the antiquarian tradition. Horace Walpole, progenitor of the Gothic novel, may have spurned association with the Society of Antiquaries, but his circle of friends and correspondents, his own reading and most of all the design and decor of Strawberry Hill, bear witness to his deep familiarity with the *antiquarian* study of the Gothic. It is the antiquarian Gothic that this chapter will pursue.

Antiquarianism emerged as a field of study out of the Renaissance interest in classical antiquity. In Britain it notably encompassed the field of Romano-British antiquities, but also extended to the study of the texts and the material remains of any period of the nation’s past. There is no space here to explore the broader nature of antiquarianism, but a couple of general points are worth noting: firstly, antiquarianism was widely regarded as the inferior partner to history – it was the “handmaid” whose primary role was to provide corroborating evidence or illustrative material for the narrative of history. Antiquarians dealt with the local and the particular, rather than the general, and as such antiquarianism was regarded as a lesser intellectual activity. Secondly, men of taste tended to look down upon the kinds of objects that antiquaries concerned themselves with: rather than searching out only the finest specimens of *virtu*, antiquaries, it was said, displayed an indiscriminate interest in any artifact from the past, regardless of its artistic merits. This is of particular pertinence for the study of Gothic antiquities, for the Gothic, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries at least, was synonymous in most contexts with barbarity and want of taste; it was the ugly and deformed counterpart to the decorum and propriety of classical antiquity (Sweet 2004: 1–30).

The study of Gothic antiquities can be traced back to two different ideological traditions: firstly, High Church Toryism and veneration for the outward and physical form of religious buildings, and secondly, the political association between the concept of Gothic liberties, the ancient constitution and the liberties of freeborn Englishmen, discussed by Silver in this volume (see Chapter 1). Although this is a rhetoric that is often associated with the Whigs and a whiggish view of history, it was also frequently deployed by those of a Tory or country party disposition as a critique of perceived corruption and modern innovation. *Mutatis mutandis* these two strands continued to shape the agenda for Gothic antiquarian research into the nineteenth century. In the later eighteenth century, interest in the Gothic was undoubtedly boosted by claims from certain quarters for it being a distinctively English style of architecture in a time of rising nationalist sentiment, and by the 1830s the ecclesiologists of the Camden Society were driving forward analysis of the Gothic style and its ideal form as part of a grander project of religious reform and spiritual regeneration. These associations were both specifically Anglocentric in their emphasis: the ancient constitution was an English constitution, traceable to the Anglo Saxons, and the religious traditions which the ecclesiologists and the High Churchmen venerated were specifically those of the Church of England. How far these interests were reflected in the constituent elements of the British Isles beyond England will be discussed later in this chapter.

But in looking for the origins of Gothic antiquarianism we also need to consider how the term Gothic came into use to denote a specific period and particular type of architectural and artistic form and the traditions of description, analysis and collecting that characterized eighteenth-century antiquarian study. Before 1700 the term was rarely used except to refer to either the “Gothic constitution” or the “Gothic” peoples who had spread into Europe from the north and east to vanquish ancient Rome. By the early eighteenth century, writers such as John Evelyn and Joseph Addison were using Gothic in pejorative terms to describe a form of architecture that had degenerated from the classical norm, architecture which was deemed to be uncivilized or barbaric and was associated with a particular period of history (de Beer 1948; Buchanan 2000).

The study of specifically Gothic antiquities, then, was an eighteenth-century phenomenon, but the antiquarian study of buildings and monuments and texts from the medieval period has a considerably longer genealogy. It can be traced back in one direction to the activities of early modern antiquaries, who concentrated on recording the details of monumental tombs and ecclesiastical structures of earlier generations (Lindley 2007). The ravages of, firstly, the dissolution of the monasteries and the reformation, and secondly, the iconoclasm of the civil wars, had destroyed much of the country’s medieval fabric. Consequently, the earliest generation of antiquaries, such as William Dugdale and Simon Archer, who were largely of a royalist and a Laudian persuasion, took it upon themselves to record these losses as a protest against the extremes of Puritan iconoclasm and as an act of commemorative piety, but also out of a sense that these structures were constituent parts of the nation’s past, which in turn was a formative part of the present. Dugdale’s monumental *History of St Paul’s Cathedral* (1658) described its Gothic appearance and Inigo Jones’s alterations, as well as its documentary history, and provided an inspiration for subsequent generations, whilst the *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655),



Figure 2.1 “History Preserving the Monuments of Antiquity.” Frontispiece to Volume I of Francis Grose, *Antiquities of England and Wales*, 4 vols (1772–76)

a compendious account of all the monastic and collegiate foundations that Dugdale compiled with Roger Dodsworth, established monastic history as a legitimate field of study.

The association between religious sentiment and veneration for the Gothic or, as they were often called, ecclesiastical antiquities, continued to run closely intertwined in the period following the Glorious Revolution. Some of the most notable efforts to describe and record Gothic architecture were first articulated by High Church sympathizers such as the non-juring bishop, Richard Rawlinson, Thomas Staveloy or Browne Willis. They were inspired by a sense that the modern church had lost its way in the latitudinarian spirit of the age, and in doing so, had ceased to offer the proper respect due to its buildings, which consequently had been allowed to fall into serious disrepair. Willis and Staveloy in particular drew attention to the material fabric of the cathedrals and churches, the beauty and vulnerability of the physical structure, and showed an appreciation of the importance of illustrations which could record and preserve the details of a building’s physical appearance and which could also provide the raw material for comparative analysis.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the study of Gothic antiquities was largely synonymous with the Gothic architecture of churches, cathedrals and monastic ruins, although castles also attracted considerable attention, not least because of their associations with medieval chivalry. The study and appreciation of Gothic painting and other forms of artistic production was a largely nineteenth-century development, although some attention was paid to medieval wall paintings, notably following the discoveries at St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, in 1800 (Topham 1805–7). Medieval manuscripts, arguably another form of Gothic antiquity, had always been an important area of antiquarian scholarship, and were studied not just as historical and literary texts but also as documents illustrative of the manners and customs of the past. Joseph Strutt, for example, pioneered the study of what we would now call social history in a study of the sports and pastimes and dress of the English people based upon illuminated manuscripts in the British Library and private collections (Strutt 1774–76). In most contexts, however, the term “Gothic antiquities” would be taken to refer principally to buildings and monuments, and ecclesiastical ones at that. Publications on Gothic architecture drew overwhelmingly on ecclesiastical examples in mutually reinforcing explanations of the nature of faith and the process of design: the soaring height of the Gothic arch instantiated the attempt of medieval architects to draw the eye and the mind upward toward contemplation of God. As the century progressed, what Milton in “Il Penseroso” (1645) described as the “dim religious light” of Gothic buildings (Milton 1971: 146) was increasingly associated with the awe and mystery of the sublime, and far better suited than the simplicity and symmetry of the classical form to inspire veneration. In practical terms, the church's dominance in Gothic antiquities can be attributed to the ubiquity of the ecclesiastical Gothic inheritance, and also to the fact that a high proportion of antiquaries were churchmen who had the leisure and education to pursue antiquarian study and a vested interest in studying the antiquities of their institution. The relationship between High Churchmanship and Gothic antiquarianism was always important, although never exclusive. Moreover, it gathered increased strength with the nineteenth-century revival of High Church piety from the 1830s through organizations such as the Tractarian and Camden Societies, where there was a self-conscious identification with the traditions of seventeenth-century antiquarianism, evident in the republication of texts such as Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (Hill 2002: 165; Bradley 2000).

But interest in Gothic architecture was also being developed from another quarter, one that was less directly motivated by religious piety. Architects had never ceased entirely to operate in the Gothic idiom; indeed, the architectural historian Giles Worsley saw the Gothic tradition as a “continuous undercurrent” from the sixteenth century to the later eighteenth-century Gothic revival. The late-seventeenth-century architects Vanbrugh, Wren and Hawksmoor all deployed the Gothic idiom in both secular and ecclesiastical designs (Worsley 1995: 75–95). And some of the most perceptive observations on the Gothic style always came from practicing architects. Christopher Wren, for example, charged with rebuilding one of the most important Gothic edifices of seventeenth-century London, St Paul's, showed a keen observation of the original structure's Gothic design, even if he was dismissive of its architectural pretensions. His tract, published posthumously in *Parentalia* (1750), was highly influential both in attempts to describe the distinctive features of Gothic architecture

and for his explanation of its origins, which he located in the east, brought back to Europe by returning crusaders. (The Temple Church in London, erected by the crusading order of Knights Templar, attracted particular interest in this context.) Elsewhere, Francis Price's *A Series of Particular and Useful Observations, Made with Great Diligence and Care, Upon that Admirable Structure, the Cathedral-Church of Salisbury* (1753), which was the outcome of the restoration work he oversaw as surveyor between 1734–53, has been credited as the first publication to discuss a cathedral or church as an architectural structure, whilst James Essex, who carried out restoration work at the cathedrals of Ely and Lincoln and at King's College Chapel, explained the origins of Gothic architecture as a response to the structural problems of spanning vaults, and had a profound influence on subsequent antiquaries in the second third of the eighteenth century (McCarthy 1987: 23–24, 166–71).

John Aubrey, friend and contemporary of Sir Christopher Wren, was even more prescient in his observations on Gothic architectural features. Although he had only amateur pretensions to architectural knowledge, he was part of a scientific culture of empirical observation and taxonomical classification and extended these techniques to the study of Gothic antiquities, notably in his “Chronologia Architectonica,” where he drew up a preliminary model of the evolution of Gothic arches. The “Fashion of Windows in Civil and Ecclesiastical Buildings,” based on Aubrey's analysis, was published in 1762 as a supplement to Francis Perry's *Series of English Medals* (1762), but the manuscript itself was circulated in several versions after his death, exercising a profound influence over the next generation of antiquaries such as Smart Lethieullier and Charles Lyttelton, who built on his insights toward developing a model of the stylistic development of Gothic architecture and its ornament (Colvin 1968: 12; Sweet 2004: 257).

Aubrey's sketch is representative of the antiquary's appreciation of the importance of the visual record and of accurate illustrations in preserving historical evidence. Browne Willis's use of illustrations has already been noted, but he was following in a tradition established in the seventeenth century: Dugdale's history of St Paul's, for example, had been illustrated by Wenceslaus Hollar's engravings. Although Dugdale's observations on the physical fabric now appear limited, the illustrations were accurate and detailed and, as subsequent antiquaries were to recognize, offered unparalleled evidence of the cathedral's appearance before it was destroyed by fire in 1666. The importance of an accurate visual record runs through the correspondence and publications of the eighteenth-century antiquaries: comparison of different Gothic buildings (which was the means through which a taxonomy and classification could be arrived at) was only possible through accurate representation. Equally accurate drawings were themselves an essential means of preservation, as the Hollar drawings of Old St Paul's demonstrated, given that the preservation of antiquities at this point was a matter of preserving the memory of a building and of those who erected it, rather than its physical fabric.

Detailed drawings also encouraged greater accuracy of observation and thereby led to deeper knowledge and a more informed understanding of the development and variations of Gothic style. For much of the eighteenth century, antiquaries were preoccupied with the need to establish a history or system of Gothic architecture,

that is, a model of its evolution from the Saxon rounded arch (i.e. Romanesque), sometimes known as debased Roman style, through to the flamboyance of the Tudor period, with particular interest in pinpointing the moment when the pointed arch (the definitive Gothic feature) first emerged. This was not only because they appreciated how such a chronological typology would assist in dating buildings and other monuments, but because they also wanted to rescue Gothic architecture from the disapprobation of those who dismissed its lack of order and regularity. Analysis of its style, showing it to be governed by rules with a coherent system like classical architecture, would support its claims for architectural merit according to eighteenth-century criteria. (It was only later in the early nineteenth century that Romantic antiquarianism saw in Gothic art and architecture a liberating freedom from the stultifying uniformity of classicism.) A history would elevate a study of Gothic architecture from the realms of taste and raise the level of discussion from imprecise and ill-founded generalities. It would give the claims being made for medieval proficiency in the arts of building an unarguable basis in a language which could match the architectural treatises of Vitruvius or Alberti. Richard Gough, director of the Society of Antiquaries and one of the most important promoters of Gothic antiquities in the eighteenth century, patronized successively the architect James Essex (see above) and the draughtsman John Carter in the hope that they too would produce the wished-for history. “One cannot enough regret,” he wrote,

the little regard hitherto paid to Gothic architecture . . . Had the remains of antient buildings been more attended to, we should have seen a system of Gothic architecture in all its aeras: we should have had all its parts reduced to rules: their variations and their dates fixed together.

(Gough 1768: xx)

Unfortunately for Gough, neither Essex nor Carter produced the longed-for volume.

One of the reasons why Gothic antiquaries were so keen to establish exactly when the pointed style emerged was because the issue was so closely related to the assumption that the Gothic was a definitively English style. If the pointed arch could be shown to have emerged first in England, this would buttress the claims for its quintessential Englishness. This debate reinforced the tendency to see the Gothic as the physical embodiment of the national past, which had already developed due to its association with the Gothic constitution. As nationalism waxed stronger over the course of the century, the association between the Gothic and a national style provided an increasingly important impetus for antiquarian research and offered a domestic and patriotic alternative to the cosmopolitanism of classical antiquities represented by the Grand Tour. Moreover, as the expression of distinctively English, Christian values, it was counterposed to the corrupt and foreign influence of pagan classicism on architecture, and with the rising tide of evangelical sentiment toward the start of the nineteenth century, the Gothic style was increasingly valorized as the expression of English Protestantism, even before the advent of full-blown Victorian medievalism.

Nonetheless, there was general acknowledgement amongst many members of the antiquarian community that the Gothic style was a European phenomenon and a

corresponding interest in tracing its dissemination across the continent and in understanding the transmission of style and building techniques through invasion and conquest. Thus Andrew Coltée Ducarel attempted to identify the connections between English and Norman styles in *Anglo-Norman Architecture* (1767), a project that was resumed by J.S. Cotman and Dawson Turner in *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* (1822) in the early nineteenth century, whilst Whittington argued forcefully for the earlier emergence and superior quality of Gothic architecture in France (Whittington 1810). In the pages of *Archaeologia* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, antiquaries hotly debated the question of when and where the Gothic style had originated, and extended their inquiries concerning the origins of the Gothic arch into that most classical of territories, the Grand Tour. From this quarter, the Englishness of Gothic was seriously undermined (Sweet 2004: 262–65).

Travellers of an antiquarian persuasion paid increasingly close attention to the medieval churches of the towns and cities of France and Germany through which they passed. Once in Italy the architecture of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance began to attract more attention in its own right, changing both the itineraries and emphases of sightseeing. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when European travel could resume again, it was widely recognized that the Gothic style had emerged more or less contemporaneously across Europe, and that attempts to pinpoint specific origins were bound to failure. Instead, it was accepted that there were distinctive national variants, Italian, German, French or English (or even Scottish or Irish), which still left scope for the more chauvinist antiquaries to claim the superior quality of design and ornament to be found in the English Gothic of Westminster Abbey or York Minster over foreign counterparts (Sweet 2012: 236–66).

The preference for the term “English” to refer to Gothic architecture is not only significant as another manifestation of embattled nationalism. Also implicit in the usage of the term was a series of assumptions about English superiority and dominance within the British Isles. Whether or not the thesis of the Englishness of Gothic architecture was accepted, the Anglocentricity by which the style and its origins were discussed in the literature was well nigh absolute. Very few of the studies of Gothic architecture or architectural antiquities published in this period were written by native Scottish, Welsh or Irish antiquaries, although there were some notable exceptions, including Sir James Hall and Edward Ledwich, who both published contributions to the debate on the origins of the pointed arch (Hall 1797; Ledwich 1787). Within countries of the Celtic periphery, English antiquaries dominated publication on the subject of Gothic antiquities, hunting out specimens and appropriating them into a narrative of English dominance and cultural superiority.

Gothic architecture in Wales represented the English mastery over the Welsh in the castles built by Edward I and in the cathedrals and monasteries, which symbolized the displacement of the native Welsh church by Roman Catholicism. According to English antiquaries, the country had been sunk in barbarism until conquest by Edward I introduced elements of civilization and more sophisticated architecture. For their part, Welsh antiquaries displayed comparatively little interest in their cathedral antiquities or the monastic ruins. The castles, those other monuments of medieval grandeur, were the occasion for recounting the English subjugation of the

Welsh, rather than evoking picturesque scenes or making architectural disquisitions. For the Welsh antiquaries, druidical and bardic antiquities and the restoration of a national culture was a more profitable field to plough (Jenkins 2005; Morgan 1983). It was left to English tourists to draw attention to the ruins at Llanthony or Margam Abbey (Coxe 1801).

Gothic architecture was even more sharply evocative of English conquest for the Irish and represented only a minor strand in the agenda of the Irish antiquaries whose interests tended to focus on the earlier period of Ireland's Golden Age (the Milesian period) and for whom the Goths were hostile invaders rather than the bearers of traditions of liberty and independence. Further, the contiguity of Catholicism in Ireland left no scope for the Protestant antiquaries to indulge in nostalgic recollections of monastic piety or philanthropy; rather, monastic ruins evoked a threat which was far from dormant. Such attempts as there were to survey the early history of architectural antiquities by native scholars adopted a different explanatory framework from that of their English peers: one which was much more open to European influences, and from Spain in particular (Beauford 1790; Murphy 1795). By the 1780s, interest in Gothic antiquities was beginning to become established and Irish antiquaries such as William Beauford were commissioning drawings of Gothic antiquities by draughtsmen such as Austen Cooper and Gabrielle Beranger. The first volume on Irish Gothic antiquities, however, was actually initiated by an Englishman, Francis Grose, who began work on *Antiquities of Ireland* in 1790, tellingly some time after the *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1772–76) and *Antiquities of Scotland* (1789). He died before it could be completed and the project was taken over by the Anglo-Irish antiquary, Edward Ledwich, who concluded that Ireland's Gothic castles, churches and abbeys were English in all but location, offering further proof of Irish subordination and inferiority to England (Grose 1791: preface). It is hardly surprising that neither the Catholic nor the patriot antiquaries showed much interest in this line of inquiry and sought rather to recover the history of Ireland's Middle Ages through the “authentic” Irish antiquities of ballads and poetry or to focus on the Golden Age of saints and scholars (O'Halloran 2004). Nonetheless, by the nineteenth century, native authors such as Thomas Bell in his *Essay on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture* (1829) were writing histories of the Gothic style of architecture in Ireland.

Scotland, it was held, could not boast many specimens of Gothic architecture which could even begin to rival those of England. Its history of religious conflict had been more divisive, the destructive iconoclasm of the Reformation more comprehensive than in England, and the Presbyterian majority were not disposed to show any indulgence toward the ruins of the Catholic, Gothic past. English antiquaries took their Scottish brethren to task for a culpable neglect of their architectural antiquities. Significantly those Gothic antiquities for which the Scots could claim fame, such as the abbeys at Melrose or Jedburgh, were located in the Borders, the area of Scotland closest to English influence. In general, Scottish specimens of medieval architecture were deemed inferior, clumsy and in poor taste. The later eighteenth century saw some small improvement in the description of Scottish antiquities evident in publications such as Adam de Cardonnel's *Picturesque Antiquities of Scotland* (1788) or Cordiner's *Remarkable Ruins, and Romantic Prospects of North Britain* (1788) and *Antiquities and Scenery in the North of Scotland* (1790). But these were notably all published in London for an English market. English antiquaries, therefore,

arrogated to themselves the credit for having alerted the Scottish to the importance of preserving such remains of antiquity.

Developments in antiquarianism must not, however, be considered in isolation from broader cultural changes in this period: for example, the value attached to empirical observation and taxonomic classification was clearly characteristic of Enlightenment thought as a whole and was representative of a specific world view that put particular value on empiricism and the imposition of rational order. In the context of antiquarian and topographical literature, as we have seen, this encouraged more careful attention to the exterior form of physical structures, and an appreciation of the advantages to be gained from careful analysis and rigorous comparison (Smiles 2000). Similarly, in the later eighteenth century the sentimental turn allowed for the expression of greater emotional affect in antiquarian discourse, something which might be articulated in nostalgic longing for the simple piety evoked by a ruined church or for the chivalric world of knights and castles. Under the influence of Sir Walter Scott's novels, such reflections became ever more commonplace and the sight of any dilapidated fortification was enough to provoke a sigh that the "days of chivalry are gone" (Burgess 1781: 16; Scott 1814: 1). Similarly, monastic ruins could evoke reveries on bygone traditions of piety and charity that had sustained the fabric of society which now seemed undermined by the pressures of population growth, rising poverty and the spread of industry. This was a strain of thought that reached its culmination in A.W. Pugin's *Contrasts* of 1836. The rhetoric of regret was also precipitated by an increasingly pronounced sense of difference from the past, as well as a sense of loss: urban improvement demanded that streets be widened, market places be made clear, and gateways demolished to facilitate the free movement of traffic. The disappearance of market crosses, town walls and fortified gateways from the urban landscape precipitated a compensatory nostalgia for what had been, and increased awareness of the need to record, if not preserve, a disappearing heritage (Britton 1830).

This kind of nostalgic antiquarianism found its natural partner in the vogue for the picturesque, which delighted in the quirky detail and irregularities of the Gothic form and its potential for imaginative association. The antiquarian and the picturesque were closely allied, particularly in the literature of domestic tourism, where travellers were taught to seek out the ruined abbey and the ancient castle and to admire the picturesque effects of broken arches and decaying corbels. A basic literacy in Gothic antiquities became the norm amongst the class of leisured travellers, and a fashionable taste for the picturesque Gothic became a frequent butt of satire. It was in this context that the availability of illustrations began substantially to increase, illustrating popular series such as Britton and Brayley's *Beauties of England and Wales* (1801–16). Few of these publications were welcomed unreservedly by the true Gothic antiquary: whilst there was little dispute over the historic value of such buildings, antiquaries were wary of the less analytical and Romantic approach of picturesque writers such as William Gilpin, who prioritized aesthetics over accuracy and who were prepared to imperil the survival of a building by artfully damaging its structure or allowing ivy to shroud its walls (Gilpin 1782: 32–33; 1786: ii, 118). Antiquaries might frown upon the imaginative liberties and the lack of precision in the illustrations that characterized such publications, but the picturesque movement was a critical part of the process by which a sensibility sympathetic toward Gothic antiquities became more widely disseminated.

By the 1820s interest in Gothic antiquities had developed from being a minority pursuit to something approaching a mainstream interest. The advent of steel plate engraving and steam press printing rendered illustrated antiquarian volumes cheaper and more readily available. Firms such as that of Henry Fisher specialized in the production of volumes on antiquarian topics for a popular market. Cumulatively such publications began to map out an itinerary of the country's Gothic architectural heritage, and helped to inscribe a pantheon of architectural antiquities in the nation's imagination as part of what we would now call the national heritage. In the process of documenting the nation's Gothic antiquities it also became evident that many such buildings were in danger of demolition or unsympathetic modernization and alteration. By the 1830s the historic core of many towns and cities was facing unprecedented change with the advent of gas mains, sewers, railways and the creation of a new commercial core. The march of progress was seldom halted by the presence of Gothic antiquities, but impending destruction heightened appreciation of what was at risk, and a small but vocal community of antiquarian-minded individuals campaigned for preservation in language that emphasized the national historic importance, as well as the aesthetic qualities, of such structures. Both the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival and the movement behind the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings were rooted in the eighteenth-century study of Gothic antiquities.

REFERENCES

- Beauford, W. (1790) "A Memoir Respecting the Antiquities of the Church of Killossy, in the County of Kildare; With Some Conjectures on the Origin of Ancient Irish Churches," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 3: 75–85.
- Bradley, S. (2000) "The Roots of Ecclesiology: Late Hanoverian Attitudes to Medieval Churches," in C. Webster and J. Eliot (eds) "*A Church as it should be*": *The Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence*, Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 22–44.
- Britton, J. (1830) *The Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, London.
- Buchanan, A. (2000) "Interpretations of Medieval Architecture, 1550–1750," in M. Hall (ed.) *Gothic Architecture and its Meanings 1550–1830*, Oxford: Spire Books, 27–52.
- Burgess, T. (1781) *An Essay on the Study of Antiquities*, Oxford.
- Colvin, H.M. (1968) "Aubrey's *Chronologia Architectonica*," in J. Summerson (ed.) *Concerning Architecture. Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, London: Allen Lane, 1–12.
- Coxe, W. (1801) *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, London.
- de Beer, E.S. (1948) "Gothic: Origin and Diffusion of the Term; The Idea of Style in Architecture," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11: 145–48.
- Gilpin, W. (1782) *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales &c. Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty: Made in the Summer of the Year 1770*, London.
- (1786) *Observations on the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland*, London.
- Gough, R. (1768) *Anecdotes of British Topography*, London.
- Grose, F. (1791) *The Antiquities of Ireland*, 2 vols, London.
- Hall, Sir J. (1797) *Essay on the Origin and Principles of Gothic Architecture*, Edinburgh.

- Hill, R. (2002) “‘The ivi’d ruins of folorn Grace Dieu’: Catholics, Romantics and Late Georgian Gothic,” in M. Hall (ed.) *Gothic Architecture and its Meanings 1550–1830*, Oxford: Spire, 159–84.
- Jenkins, G. (ed.) (2005) *A Rattleskull Genius: The Many Faces of Iolo Morgannwg*, Cardiff: Cardiff University Press.
- Ledwich, E. (1787) “Observations on Antient Churches,” *Archaeologia* 8: 165–94.
- Lindley, P. (2007) *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern England*, Stamford: Shaun Tyas.
- Milton, John. (1971) “Il Penseroso,” in J. Carey (ed.) *John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, London and New York: Longman, 139–46.
- Morgan, P. (1983) “From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period,” in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 43–100.
- Murphy, J. (1795) *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Views of the Church of Batalha in the Province of Estremadura in Portugal*, London.
- O’Halloran, C. (2004) *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, 1750–1800*, Cork: Cork University Press.
- Scott, Sir W. (1814) *Border Antiquities of England and Scotland*, London.
- Smiles, S. (2000) *Eyewitness: Artists and Visual Documentation in Britain, 1770–1830*, Ashgate: Aldershot.
- Strutt, J. (1774–76) *Horda-Angel-Cynnan: The Manners and Customs, Arms and Habits of the Inhabitants of England*, 3 vols, London.
- Sweet, R. (2004) *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, London: Hambledon and London.
- (2012) *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, 1690–1820*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Topham, J. (1805–7) *Some Account of the Collegiate Chapel of Saint Stephen, Westminster*, London: Society of Antiquaries.
- Whittington, G.D. (1810) *An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France; With a View to Illustrate the Rise and Progress of Gothic Architecture in Europe*, London.
- Worsley, G. (1995) *Classical Architecture in Britain: The Heroic Age*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

FURTHER READING

- Brooks, C. (1999) *The Gothic Revival*, London: Phaidon Press. (The best general account of the Gothic revival, taking it back to its seventeenth-century roots, with good coverage of the antiquarian context.)
- Clark, K. (1962) *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste*, Harmondsworth: Penguin. (The classic text that defined the terms of debate for most of the twentieth century.)
- Colvin, H. (1968) “Aubrey’s *Chronologia Architectonica*,” in J. Summerson (ed.) *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, London: Allen Lane, 1–12. (An important article on a seminal text for the study of Gothic antiquities.)
- Hall, M. (ed.) (2000) *Gothic Architecture and its Meanings 1550–1830*, Oxford: Spire Books. (Collection of essays on evolving attitudes toward Gothic architecture and its interpretation.)
- Levine, J.M. (1987) “Eighteenth-Century Historicism and the First Gothic Revival,” in *Humanism and History. Origins of Modern English Historiography*, Ithaca: Cornell

- University Press, 190–213. (Considers Gothic antiquarianism and the emergence of a more culturally relativist – that is, historicist – approach to the past which enabled contemporaries to view the cultural productions of the medieval period on their own terms.)
- McCarthy, M. (1987) *Origins of the Gothic Revival*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (Analyses architectural responses to the Gothic revival, and places them in their ideological and antiquarian contexts.)
- Mordaunt Crook, J. (1968) “John Britton and the Genesis of the Gothic Revival,” in J. Summerson (ed.) *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, London: Allen Lane, 98–119. (Britton was responsible for numerous topographical and antiquarian publications in the early nineteenth century, helping to popularize the study of Gothic antiquities.)
- (1995) *John Carter and the Mind of the Gothic Revival*, London: W.S. Maney & Son in Association with the Society of Antiquaries. (Carter was a key figure campaigning for the preservation Gothic antiquities in the later eighteenth century and championed the thesis of English origins for the pointed arch.)
- Parry, G. (1995) *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Important study of the seventeenth-century forebears in antiquarianism.)
- Pearce, S. (ed.) (2007) *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries, 1707–2007*, London: Society of Antiquaries. (Recent collection of essays on the Society of Antiquaries and the study of antiquities, with several chapters covering the eighteenth century.)
- Smith, R.J. (1983) *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Constitutions in British Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (The best analysis of the role played by the ideal of the Gothic constitution in contemporary political thought.)
- Sweet, R. (2001) “Antiquities and Antiquaries in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34.2: 181–206. (A study of antiquarian attitudes to the past, focusing particularly on the achievements of Richard Gough.)
- Woolf, D. (2003) *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1550–1730*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Major study of the broader social and cultural value of antiquarianism and perceptions of the past in the early modern period.)

CHAPTER THREE

GOTHIC AND THE NEW AMERICAN REPUBLIC, 1770–1800



Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock

The American Gothic literary tradition arguably begins at the cusp of the nineteenth century, with the publication by Philadelphia native Charles Brockden Brown of his four Gothic novels, *Wieland; Or, The Transformation. An American Tale* (1798); *Ormond; Or, The Secret Witness* (1799); *Arthur Mervyn; Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799 and 1800); and *Edgar Huntly; Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799). In each of these works, Brown adapted to his post-Revolutionary American setting the conventions of the European Gothic novel associated with Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Friedrich von Schiller and others. The birth of the American Gothic, therefore, must be considered as Brown's artistic transmutation of a confluence of cultural forces in light of available literary templates. This chapter accordingly will first survey the gothicized conditions of daily life during the colonial and early American republic periods, with attention paid in particular to the "raw materials" for the Gothic offered by the looming presence of the wilderness and the associated confrontation with the racial Other, the legacy of New England Puritanism, the pervasiveness of disease, and the overheated political contest between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans with its attendant conspiracy paranoia. The literary templates available to Brown, including the importation of Gothic novels into America, will then be noted briefly before offering a more detailed consideration of Brown's appropriation of Gothic forms and native materials in North America's first Gothic novels.

RAW MATERIALS

Any consideration of the origins of the American Gothic tradition and Charles Brockden Brown's contributions to it must necessarily be situated within the broader framework of Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary America – a period that, as Linda Kerber asserts, was one of the most intellectually traumatic in American history (Kerber 1970: viii). In the 1790s, when Brown completed the bulk of his writing, the United States was a gigantic experiment and, as Jane Tompkins asserts, it was not clear at any given moment that it would even still exist at all the next year or the following (Tompkins 1985: 47). Brown's Gothic fictions clearly reflect the

upheavals of his era and the circumstances of daily life as he insistently meditates upon the external forces that constrain and dictate the course of human events, as well as both the promise and perils of new systems of governance and thought. Gothic elements of everyday eighteenth-century life found expression in literary form through Brown's pen, and the subsequent repetition and elaboration of these elements established archetypes of the American literary Gothic.

An inescapable feature of the eighteenth-century American experience was the landscape itself, and David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, and Joanne B. Karpinski assert in their introduction to *Frontier Gothic* that the most fundamental conflict shaping the "American experience" was "the battle between civilization and nature, between the mental landscape of European consciousness and the physical and psychical landscape of the New World" (Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski 1993: 15). For inhabitants of North America during the eighteenth century, the wilderness was simply a fact of life. This was a world in which most people seldom ventured more than a few miles from home due to terrible or non-existent roads, and, although urban areas such as Brown's Philadelphia were rapidly expanding, roads outside of town centers quickly degenerated into unlit dirt paths. Walking north or west outside of Philadelphia, for example, one could speedily leave behind urban life and enter unsettled wilderness areas still frequented by predatory animals in which getting lost or injured were legitimate concerns.

American literature, from its very beginnings, takes up and magnifies these anxieties related to the landscape, installing within the haunted heart of the American Gothic tradition the wilderness and the frontier as spaces of danger, savagery, and violence – and as uncanny contact zones with racialized and exoticized Others. In the writings of the earliest American colonizers, including John Smith, John Winthrop and William Bradford, the struggle for survival is a contest with nature and with the "savage and brutish men" (Bradford 1953: 25), the Indians, who inhabit the forest. Cotton Mather famously figures the American wildness as the "devil's territories" (Mather 1998: 421) in *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), reinforcing the correlation made between Native Americans and the devil repeatedly emphasized in Native American captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's popular *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* (1682) published eleven years before. Indeed, the Indian in many early American narratives is represented as a type of supernatural agent, as a figurative or literal demonic entity obstructing and actively threatening immigrant agendas in the New World. Of interest to Brown also would have been J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur's *An American Farmer* (1782), a work that depicts the "great woods" (de Crèvecoeur 1904: 58) as a place where men "appear to be no better than carnivorous animals of a superior rank, living on the flesh of wild animals" (1904: 59). By virtue of living in or near the woods, even "civilized" men are rendered "ferocious, gloomy, and unsociable" (1904: 67), and all too easily transform into animals.

As a bulwark against the dark woods and the "heathenish" dark-skinned indigenous inhabitants residing there – as well as against Enlightenment-influenced reformulations or rejections of traditional organized religion being imported from Europe – conservative Old Light Calvinists (based in New England) and New Light evangelicals (issuing forth from the mid-Atlantic seaboard) attempted to illuminate

the world with the word of God. Puritan religious discourse and the evangelical rhetoric of the eighteenth-century Great Awakening, however, often contained a pronounced Gothic element that stressed the inscrutability of the deity and helplessness of “unsaved” or “natural men” against his wrath. The apocalypticism of Puritan minister Michael Wigglesworth’s 1662 *The Day of Doom*, with its fierce denunciation of sinners and horrific images of damnation, sets the tone for this tradition, one then notably taken up later by Puritan minister Jonathan Edwards in his dramatic 1741 sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. Indeed, Edwards’s representation of an omnipotent and wrathful God who holds ultimate power over life and death, and dangles sinners over the flames of perdition much as one would hold a spider or some other “loathsome insect over the fire” (Edwards 2007), seems directly to presage post-humanist Lovecraftian “cosmic horror,” in which the continued existence of the human race depends upon the whims of monstrously powerful extraterrestrial “Elder Gods.”

Much of the force of such religious discourse derived from the commonplace facticity of death during the colonial period, a factor that persisted well into the nineteenth century. The average life expectancy in North America in the eighteenth century was in the mid-30s (Haines 2008) and infant mortality was common in the colonial and early republic periods, as testified to both by the available ethnographic data and by numerous elegies for lost children. Edwards, in fact, repeatedly emphasizes in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* that the “unseen, unthought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable” (Edwards 2007). Youth and good health are no guarantors of longevity, as God can withdraw his support at any moment.

Of course, that the “arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day” (Edwards 2007) was by no means unique to the New World. What did distinguish the New World from the Old, however, was a particular species of pestilence common to tropical and sub-tropical regions: yellow fever, a disease that routinely ravaged East coast and southern American cities into the early part of the twentieth century, and which Brown made central both to *Ormond* and to *Arthur Mervyn* in lurid passages describing a decimated city. As I will detail in more depth below, 1793 (the year in which both *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* are set) was an especially bad plague year. In Philadelphia, some 2,500 people died over the course of a six-week period, and over 5,000 died before the plague subsided: more than a tenth of the city’s population of 45,000 (Nash 2002: 127; see also Weigley 1982: 188).

While literal disease periodically ravaged East coast North American cities, many more Americans were swept up in panics over the figurative pestilence of radical ideology. Revolutions abroad in the second half of the eighteenth century and the importation of radical doctrines at home, most specifically those of British radical democrats William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft and their followers, combined with internal debates over slavery and Indian policy and dramatic shifts in financial policy and industrial production, resulting in a United States fraught with political tension and extreme factionalism in the 1790s. Vigorous political debates pivoted around issues of how much power the federal government should possess, whether the United States should ally itself with Great Britain or France, and, in keeping with Godwinian meditations, whether human beings in general possessed the capacity for

self-governance. The ideological debate over the power that the government should possess, which indeed shaped the American Constitution, was sharpened in the 1790s by a series of events linking the domestic and international spheres, events that further factionalized the United States almost to the point of civil war.

Not surprisingly, during this feverish period of political jockeying, which culminated in 1798 with the Alien and Sedition Acts and the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, conspiracy theories were rife. Both Federalists and Republicans accused their opponents of subterfuge and devious dealing. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of conspiratorial rhetoric was the Illuminati panic of 1798–99, an event that clearly informs both Brown's *Ormond* and his *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* (1803–5; see Brown 1977), each of which features individuals who are members of Illuminati-like secret societies. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, two European books written independently of each other, Abbé de Barruel's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme* (1797–98) and John Robison's *Proofs of a conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried on in the secret meetings of the Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies* (1797), purported to trace all the revolutionary upheavals of the current age to the clandestine machinations of this secret society “dedicated to the general destruction of government and religion, and that now operated through its covert agents in all the nations of Europe and in the United States” (Kafer 2004: 142). By mid-1798, as Richard Buel observes, “Illuminati became a household word in America” (quoted in Levine 1989: 22), and in Brown's home city of Philadelphia, a major destination in the 1790s for political refugees of all stripes, “the end result of the repeated declarations of French, Illuminati, Federalist-aristocratic, and even Irish conspiracy was a near panic situation” (Levine 1989: 23).

My argument here is that these gothicized elements of American life in the latter part of the eighteenth century – the looming presence of the frontier and the wilderness, the encounter with the exoticized and demonized Other, grimly apocalyptic religious rhetoric, the commonplace confrontation with pestilence and mortality, conspiracy paranoia, and general anxieties related to the potential disintegration of a newly formed nation – supplied Brown with an overabundance of dark themes from which to choose in fashioning his literary experiments, and indeed help to support Leslie Fiedler's famous pronouncement that the American literary tradition (which arguably started with Brown) is essentially a Gothic one (Fiedler 1992: 142). Before turning to Brown, however, one last piece of the puzzle must be supplied, and that is some background on the literary templates available to Brown in the late eighteenth century.

While traces are apparent in Brown's work of many different literary forms, reflecting his wide-ranging intellectual tastes and investigations, Brown arguably drew upon, blended and innovated most heavily upon three popular eighteenth-century categories of literature: sentimental romances, Gothic romances and “novels of purpose.” As Russel B. Nye explains, the most popular variety of fiction available to Brown as a model was the sentimental romance associated with such British authors as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Laurence Sterne. In novels along the lines of Richardson's *Pamela, or virtue rewarded* (1740), virtue is pitted against vice as innocence is attacked in scenes staged to evoke emotional responses from readers of fine sensibility. The influence of the sentimental novel is readily apparent

throughout Brown's body of work, but most especially in *Ormond*, in which his female characters all seem derived from this tradition, as well as in his two final epistolary works, *Jane Talbot* (1801) and *Clara Howard* (1801).

The second major literary form clearly influencing Brown, and from which he undoubtedly drew inspiration, was the literary craze of the 1790s, the Gothic novel, as epitomized in the works of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Popular magazines in the 1790s "overflowed with stories crammed with haunted castles, secret passages, ghosts, damp tombs, mysterious chests, [and] unearthly shrieks" (Nye 1982: 314), sources which Brown, who particularly esteemed Radcliffe, adapted into his tales of murder, insanity, confinement, sleepwalking, pestilence, attempted rape and other lurid subjects. Connected to Brown's appropriation and manipulation of Gothic themes and tropes is also the influx of sensationalist German romances that began to filter across the Atlantic in the 1790s. Like their British Gothic counterparts, these tales of murder, torture and rape were often criticized for their perceived immorality, even as they were widely distributed and eagerly consumed. Warfel has noted Brown's familiarity with, and the possible influence of, German "terror novels" – including Friedrich von Schiller's unfinished *Der Geisterseher* (*The Ghost-Seer*; published in periodical form, 1787–89) and Cajetan Tschink's *The Victim of Magical Delusion* (1795) – on his fiction (Warfel 1974: 11).

Less lurid but equally engaging were writings by the Enlightenment-influenced French *philosophes* and British "novelists of purpose." Popular during the 1790s and after, these were productions by socially conscious writers in England who believed that the novel could be used as a medium through which to debate contemporary issues, as well as an instrument of social protest and change (Nye 1982: 316). Foremost among the novels of purpose was William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). Brown at various times in his journals and letters mentions French authors Montesquieu, Helvétius, d'Holbach, Diderot, d'Alembert, Fenelon, La Bruyère, Voltaire and La Rochefoucauld (Nye 1982: 317–18), and it is clear that Brown was heavily influenced by Rousseau.

The novels that Brown produced were conscious attempts to combine elements from these various traditions into something new, something intrinsically American: an "American novel, built around native scenery, native incidents, blended into the form and style of his European models" (Nye 1982: 321). His awareness of pioneering a new literary form in a new country seeking to define itself is made most explicit in his "To the Public" note at the start of *Edgar Huntly*, where he proposes that the American Indian and American wilderness will substitute in his novel for "Gothic castles and chimeras" (Brown 2006a: 4). Taking Gothic elements of the American experience and discourse as inspiration and raw material, Brown overlaid the available literary templates, stretching and reshaping them as needed, to produce the first American Gothic novels.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN AND THE INVENTION OF THE AMERICAN GOTHIC

In my study of Charles Brockden Brown (Weinstock 2012), I assert that, beyond publishing the first American Gothic novel with *Wieland*, Brown must be recognized as an important innovator within four subcategories of the Gothic: the psychological,

the frontier, the urban, and the female. In brief, starting with the psychological Gothic, although Edgar Allan Poe is generally regarded as the Gothic author who shifted the focus of fear away from external threats and emphasized instead the irrationality of the human mind (see, for example, Bloom 2007 and Fisher 2002), what stands out most clearly about Brown's novels is their critique of Enlightenment rationality and Lockean sensationalist psychology that presumes the mind to be able to draw accurate inferences based on sensory perception. Well before Poe and Sigmund Freud, Brown presents to the reader a model of human cognition that emphasizes the uncertainty of assumptions based on sensory impressions and the unsettling power of the human unconscious. In Brown's fiction, it is the mind, rather than the external world, that is a haunted space. This psychological Gothic drama, while evident in all of Brown's novels, is most obvious in his first, *Wieland*, and his last, *Edgar Huntly*.

Deriving inspiration from the case of James Yates, a man who in 1781 heard voices and murdered his wife and three children in upstate New York, *Wieland* recounts the horrible events that befall the narrator Clara Wieland, her brother Theodore, and a close circle of family and friends who are at the center of a series of baffling events. First, Wieland, Sr. bizarrely dies from what seems to be spontaneous human combustion. A number of years later, mysterious voices are heard making prophecies, offering warnings and plotting to kill Clara. These events culminate in Theodore's belief that he has been commanded by God to sacrifice his family: he murders his wife and four children and unsuccessfully pursues Clara to complete his bloody business.

The central question at the heart of *Wieland* is what to make of the mysterious voices. Most of the strange happenings can be attributed to the machinations of a stranger named Carwin, a "biloquist" or ventriloquist who confesses to misleading the Wielands and Clara's suitor, Henry Pleyel. Carwin, however, steadfastly maintains that the voice commanding Theodore to render up his family to God was not his, thus allowing for three explanations: Carwin may be lying and Theodore's actions were precipitated by human intervention; Wieland is mad and the voices in his head compelling him to kill were his own; or, like Abraham in the Bible, commanded by God to sacrifice Isaac, Theodore truly did hear the voice of God. While the novel does not conclusively answer this question, the text does insistently thematize the precariousness of conclusions drawn from sensory data and the irrationality of human cognition. As both Looby (1996) and Hagenbüchle (1988) maintain, Brown in *Wieland* essentially calls into question the human ability to access truth and to be certain of anything at all. In the process, the novel also offers a rationalist critique of the kind of religious zealotry embodied by figures such as Jonathan Edwards, and exemplified in the text by Wieland, Sr.

These themes of the precariousness of human assumptions and the irrationality of human impulses are developed most fully in Brown's fourth novel, *Edgar Huntly*. *Edgar Huntly* is ostensibly a murder mystery, as the eponymous protagonist attempts to track down the killer of his friend Waldegrave. Disconnections between intention and action and evidence and inference, however, are evident almost immediately as Edgar happens across an unexpected sight: a man digging in the middle of the night in the woods by the scene of Waldegrave's murder. Stranger still, Edgar concludes that the man, identified later as Clithero Edny, is asleep. This, in a nutshell, is the

fundamental premise informing all of *Edgar Huntly*: human beings are not always or even mostly in control of themselves. Unconscious impulses and repressed desires and anxieties move individuals in ways of which we are not aware.

As the novel progresses, stranger and stranger things continue to happen to Edgar. Not only has Waldegrave been murdered, but also a packet of his letters entrusted to Edgar by Waldegrave disappears. Most dramatically, Edgar wakes up in the dark in a pit. The letters, he presumes, must have been stolen, although why anyone would want them or how anyone could find them is a mystery. As for ending up in the pit, Edgar is baffled, but concludes when he finds Indians in possession of his musket that he must have been knocked over the head, kidnapped and deposited there. The truth that the reader discovers at the end is that Edgar himself is the thief in the night who removed Waldegrave's letters, and that Edgar is responsible for his own interment in the pit: Edgar, mirroring Clithero, is also a sleepwalker. Well before Poe and Freud, what Brown presents in *Edgar Huntly* is a picture of a world in which the individual cannot be certain of anything, and in which to be haunted is the fundamental human condition. The realization at the heart of Brown's psychological Gothic is that the psyche is essentially a haunted space.

While Brown consistently paints a picture of human beings as strangers to themselves, he also quite consciously made use of the American wilderness as an essential component of his Gothic writing, thus pioneering the American frontier Gothic. He indicates this intention, as noted above, in a note to the public prefacing *Edgar Huntly*, in which he explains that it is the purpose of his work to "exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country" (Brown 2006a: 3). In place of the established conventions of the European Gothic, he will substitute devices which he feels are more appropriate to the American situation: "incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness" (Brown 2006a: 3-4). In keeping with this expressed intention, much of *Edgar Huntly* involves his protagonist's sojourns through the wild and rude wilderness of Norwalk, Pennsylvania. Along the way, he kills and eats a panther, rescues a captive woman from Indians, seemingly rises from the dead, and jumps from a cliff into a river. In *Edgar Huntly*, his short story "Somnambulism" (1805) and to a lesser extent *Wieland*, Brown arguably was the first American author to realize the potential of the American wilderness for constructing an intrinsically American Gothic romance. In so doing, Brown, as Seelye observes, established the borders of a distinctly American fiction (Seelye 1988: 184).

In addition to making use of the raw material of the American wilderness for constructing his American Gothic, Brown also exploited the fundamental uncanniness of urban existence, most notably in *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn*, his two novels set in Philadelphia during the deadly 1793 yellow fever outbreak that ravaged the city. Although the urban Gothic subgenre is usually considered by critics to have developed later in the nineteenth century (see, for example, Mighall 1999 and Spencer 1992), Brown in these two novels clearly constructs his urban environment as a labyrinthine space concealing vice and deceit. The essence of Brown's urban Gothic in *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* is to turn Philadelphia into a city of the dying and the dead, a city of ghouls that prey upon the downtrodden.

Ormond tells the story of the virtuous Constantia Dudley, who attempts to care for herself and her impoverished father in the midst of plague, surrounded by

heartlessness and deception. Indeed, the related themes of disguise and forgery are insistently foregrounded in *Ormond*. The villainous Thomas Craig initially presents himself as frank, modest and forthright, and is welcomed into Mr Dudley home and business where he proceeds to embezzle funds and ruin the Dudley name and fortune. Although actuated by the love of liberty rather than the desire for personal gain, Martinette de Beauvais, a cross-dressing freedom fighter masquerading as Ursula Monrose, presents an equally false front to the world. And the true master of disguise and obfuscation is revealed to be none other than Ormond himself, the eponymous antagonist – and secret society member – of the novel. Ormond, like his sister Martinette and Craig, presents himself as the opposite of what he really is. The face that he shows to the world is one governed solely by dispassionate reason. In the end, though, he is revealed to be an egomaniacal criminal, governed by lust and the desire for power.

In *Arthur Mervyn*, Brown again presents an image of a Philadelphia devastated by plague and rife with corruption. In *Arthur Mervyn*, however, the question of the reliability of perceptions thematized in *Ormond* becomes all encompassing. The accuracy of assumptions made about everything and everyone in *Arthur Mervyn*, including those made by the reader about the eponymous protagonist himself, are repeatedly called into question and, as in *Ormond*, this epistemological uncertainty is echoed and magnified by the psychological distortions and confusion of the urban environment that, as Grabo asserts, “itself takes on nearly the aspect of a character whose conditions generate the actions of most of the other characters, and whose contagions infect all” (Grabo 1980: 450). Well ahead of later nineteenth-century literary trends, Brown in *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* creates a picture of the fundamental strangeness of urban existence in which one lives in close proximity to multitudes one does not know: apartments and houses conceal vice and crime, streets that seem straight curve and lead in unexpected directions, and all assumptions based on appearances are suspect.

In addition to the psychological, frontier and urban Gothics, Brown was instrumental in developing one other subgenre of the Gothic: the female Gothic that dramatizes women’s disempowerment, the mode that highlights the forces of explicit and implicit violence used against women to coerce their submission and critiques female oppression. These are themes that Brown explicitly considered in his dialogue on women’s rights, *Alcuin* (parts I and II, 1798; complete text posthumously published in 1815). He subsequently dramatized them in his fiction, most notably in *Wieland* and *Ormond*.

Wieland is a Gothic tale of victimization and murder, and Clara, as Christophersen notes, is a heroine clearly indebted to Radcliffe and the Gothic tradition (Christophersen 1993: 127). In the midst of a story replete with seemingly supernatural phenomena, Brown repeatedly places Clara in situations in which, first, her virtue, and subsequently, her life, are in danger. Far from being a conventional Gothic heroine, however, Clara has her own house, her own thoughts and her own identity. She has received an unconventional education for a young woman of the time: seemingly in keeping with Wollstonecraft’s recommendations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Clara appears to have been educated together with her brother and participates in the intellectual life of her small community. With admirable Enlightenment clarity, Clara investigates unusual circumstances to the

best of her ability, and inclines toward rejecting groundless conjecture or supernatural explanations.

The dilemma that Clara faces, however, is that no amount of level-headed investigation or rational cogitation can penetrate or undo the irrational restrictions on female autonomy and potential in Clara's rigidly patriarchal culture. What Brown's novel ultimately reveals is that Clara's real problem is not Carwin or Pleyel, or even her brother Wieland, but rather the all-encompassing and smothering patriarchal system their combination represents. Carwin's role here is clearest: he is a sort of watered-down Gothic villain who sports with Clara because she is vulnerable. What he brings to the fore through his actions is the threat of sexual violence against women, the violence underlying and energizing both the conventional Gothic and sentimental romance plots.

Brown's Wollstonecraftian feminism, clearly on display in *Wieland*, arguably finds its fullest expression in *Ormond*, a text which fuses the explicit meditation on women's rights initiated in *Alcuin* with the female Gothic plot derived from Radcliffe and others. The problem for Constantia is that it is hard to be a self-aware independent woman in a world that preys on weakness and presumes women to be less competent and weaker than men. Constantia's is a world in which a woman goes from living in her father's household to her husband's – and by default shares the fortunes of both – and in which a woman without a male protector is a target. Brown's original spin on the female Gothic plot is to make his protagonist Constantia in *Ormond* an atypical and self-aware Gothic heroine who consciously considers the ways in which both law and custom conspire to disempower her sex.

Charles Brockden Brown, North America's first Gothic novelist, should thus also be considered a central figure in the development of four subgenres of the Gothic: the psychological, the frontier, the urban and the female. In *Wieland*, *Ormond*, *Arthur Mervyn*, and *Edgar Huntly*, as well as to a lesser extent in his dialogue on women's rights, *Alcuin*, his sentimental novels, *Clara Howard* and *Jane Talbot*, and his other writings, Brown consciously appropriated elements of the existing Gothic novel tradition and rescripted them better to reflect his own insights and experiences in a newly-established country anxiously attempting to chart its path forward on the cusp of the nineteenth century. In his novels, Brown presents the dark underside to Enlightenment optimism as he repeatedly questions the extent to which human beings can draw accurate inferences from sensory data and foresee the outcome of their actions. In advance of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper and Ambrose Bierce, he depicts the American frontier as a liminal zone fraught with danger. Looking forward to Charles Dickens, George Lippard and even twentieth-century film noir, Brown establishes the city as itself a sort of labyrinthine wildness populated by insidious confidence men. Setting the stage for Edgar Allan Poe's fiction and, later, Sigmund Freud's psychology, Brown powerfully represents the mind as inherently haunted as the unconscious compels irrational and "perverse" behavior. And well before Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton and such contemporary authors as Margaret Atwood and Angela Carter, Brown in his female Gothic narratives vividly demonstrates the forms of violence and victimization to which women in patriarchal culture are exposed.

REFERENCES

- Bloom, C. (ed.) (2007) *Gothic Horror*, 2nd edn, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bradford, W. (1953) *Plymouth Plantation 1620–1647*, 1650, ed. S.E. Morison, New York: Knopf.
- Brown, C.B. (1977) *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, in *Wieland; Or The Transformation. An American Tale*, 1803–5, eds S.J. Krause and S.W. Reid, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- (1987) *Alcuin; A Dialogue* together with *Memoirs of Stephen Calvert*, 1815, eds S.J. Krause and S.W. Reid, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- (2006a) *Edgar Huntly; Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker, with Related Texts*, 1799, eds P. Barnard and S. Shapiro, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- (2006b) “Somnambulism. A Fragment,” 1805, in P. Barnard and S. Shapiro (eds) *Edgar Huntly; Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker, with Related Texts*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 244–58.
- (2008) *Arthur Mervyn; Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793, with Related Texts*, 1799–1800, eds P. Barnard and S. Shapiro, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- (2009a) *Ormond; Or the Secret Witness with Related Texts*, 1799, eds P. Barnard and S. Shapiro, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- (2009b) *Wieland; Or the Transformation. An American Tale with Related Texts*, 1798, eds P. Barnard and S. Shapiro, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Christophersen, B. (1993) *The Apparition in the Glass: Charles Brockden Brown’s American Gothic*, Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Crèvecoeur, J. (1904) *Letters from an American Farmer*, 1782, New York: Fox, Duffield.
- Edwards, J. (2007) *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, 1741. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.sinners.html>> (accessed August 24, 2012).
- Fiedler, L. (1992) *Love & Death in the American Novel*, 1960, New York: Anchor.
- Fisher, B.F. (2002) “Poe and the Gothic Tradition,” in K.J. Hayes (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 72–91.
- Grabo, N.S. (1980) “Historical Essay,” in S.J. Krause and S.W. Reid (eds) *Arthur Mervyn; Or Memoirs of the Year 1793, First and Second Parts, the Novels and Related Works of Charles Brockden Brown*, vol. 3. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 447–75.
- Hagenbüchle, R. (1988) “American Literature and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis in Epistemology: The Example of Charles Brockden Brown,” *Early American Literature*, 23.2: 121–51.
- Haines, M. (2008) “Fertility and Mortality in the United States,” *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, ed. R. Whaples. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/haines.demography>> (accessed August 24, 2012).
- Kafer, P. (2004) *Charles Brockden Brown’s Revolution and the Birth of the American Gothic*, Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.
- Kerber, L.K. (1970) *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Levine, R.S. (1989) *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Looby, C. (1996) *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mather, C. (1998) *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 1693, in P. Lauter, et al. (eds) *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, vol. 1, 3rd edn, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 421–25.

- Mighall, R. (1999) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mogen, D., Sanders, S.P. and Karpinski, J.B. (1993) "Introduction," in D. Mogen, S.P. Sanders, and J.B. Karpinski (eds) *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at the Frontier in American Literature*, Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1–27.
- Nash, G.B. (2002) *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Nye, R.B. (1982) "Historical Essay," in S.J. Krause and S.W. Reid (eds) *Ormond; Or The Secret Witness. The Novels and Related Works of Charles Brockden Brown*, vol. 2, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 295–341.
- Seelye, J. (1988) "Charles Brockden Brown and Early American Fiction," in E. Elliott (ed.) *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press, 168–86.
- Spencer, K. (1992) "Purity and Danger: *Dracula*, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis," *ELH*, 59: 197–225.
- Tompkins, J. (1985) *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790–1860*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Warfel, H.R. (1974) *Charles Brockden Brown: American Gothic Novelist*, New York: Octagon.
- Weigley, R.F. (ed.) (1982) *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Weinstock, J.A. (2012) *Charles Brockden Brown*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Wollstonecraft, M. (1792) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, London.

FURTHER READING

- Barnard, P., Kamrath, M.L., and Shapiro, S. (eds) (2004) *Revising Charles Brockden Brown: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality in the Early Republic*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. (A selection of critical essays on Brown, not limited to the Gothic novels.)
- Clemit, P. (1993) *The Godwinian Novel: The Rational Fictions of Godwin, Brockden Brown, Mary Shelley*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. (An analysis of the significance of Godwinian philosophy on Brown and others.)
- Davidson, C.N. (1986) *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, New York: Oxford University Press. (An important analysis of the development of the American novel that offers some consideration of Brown.)
- Grabo, N.S. (1981) *The Coincidental Art of Charles Brockden Brown*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. (Argues that Brown's reliance on coincidence is not an important aspect of his art.)
- Ringe, D.A. (1982) *American Gothic: Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press. (This survey of the development of the American Gothic includes consideration of the importation of European Gothic texts.)
- Rosenthal, B. (ed.) (1981) *Critical Essays on Charles Brockden Brown*, Boston: G.K. Hall. (A selection of essays by various sources on aspects of Brown's writing.)

CHAPTER FOUR

GOTHIC AND THE CELTIC FRINGE, 1750–1850



James Kelly

In the Irish novelist John Banim's *Revelations of the Dead-Alive* (1824), the narrator is transported to London in 2023–24, where he finds that the local intelligentsia read Sir Walter Scott not as the progenitor of the historical novel but rather as the last in line of an earlier Gothic style:

[Horace] Walpole's little crude tale is the first parent of all that wild legend in our language; that Lewis is its more fruitful propagator; and that Ann Radcliff [*sic*] is its first, and [Scott], its last and most successful adaptor or modifier.

(Banim 1824: 95–96)

Recent criticism has returned to Scott's debts to Gothic fiction (see Duncan 1992; Robertson 1994; Gamer 2000): Banim's satirical account of his work should make us wary of too rigidly separating fictional work from this period into self-contained categories. Historical understanding was central to fiction in Ireland and Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the generic conflict between the fantastic romance and the realist novel was intimately connected to attempts to understand the past and its bearing on the present.

The problem in defining and ring-fencing genres comes from an assumption that the generic categories of "historical novel" and "Gothic romance" were as clearly recognized in the Romantic century (1750–1850) as in our own. This leads to discussions as to whether the "Gothic" be best thought of as a genre, mode or register, and whether any writing that depicts bodily suffering, or appeals to the reader's emotion by deploying violent imagery, can be categorized as Gothic. The latter contention has caused problems of categorization in surveys of Irish and Scottish literature. Irish and Scottish writers in the period under view were able to draw on a reservoir of lurid, violent imagery from recent historical events, and a still-pervasive traditional culture of the supernatural (Banim notes that Scott adapts the Gothic to "local gossip") when writing their own fictions, elements which can often make identifying a Gothic genre a difficult task (see Kilfeather 2004).

The post-1688 settlement which provided the foundation for eighteenth-century stability in England looked very different from the Celtic periphery. As Thomas

Moore, deploying a political rhetoric widely recognizable to his readers, noted in *Corruption and Intolerance* (1808) the Glorious Revolution “was little more than a recognition of ancient privileges, a restoration of that old Gothic structure, which was brought from the woods of Germany into England” (Moore 1808: 5). However, to Ireland, “the Revolution brought nothing but injury and insult” (Moore 1808: vi), and the subsequent poem deploys imagery more suitable to our modern understanding of Gothic horror than eighteenth-century political understandings of the word:

That greedy vampire, which from Freedom’s tomb
Comes forth, with all the mimicry of bloom
Upon its lifeless cheek, and sucks and drains
A people’s blood to feed its putrid veins!

(Moore 1808: 26)

Images of horror and terror suffuse political writing, as writers sought to appeal to the emotions of their audiences. Threats are described as phantoms, specters or gorgons, and political enemies as either drenched in or drunk on “the unhallowed commixture of the tears and blood of the widow and the orphan” (Cox 1810: 3). Registers, themes and images that we associate with Gothic fiction were so prevalent in Irish printed and oral culture that modern observers might conclude that there were aspects of the Gothic in everything. In Sydney Owenson’s national tale *Florence McCarthy* (1818) two travellers approach Naas, and their coach-driver points out, “bleached and shining in the noon-day sun-beam,” an executed 1798 rebel’s head: “Such are the objects still exhibited in Ireland, as monuments of times of terror . . . The Commodore turned away his eyes in disgust, and passed under the fine arch of a ruined monastery of Dominicans” (Owenson 1818: 1.89).

The Gothic ruin allows some relief from a Gothic reality, but Owenson’s wider fiction often remained unsure as to whether aesthetic contemplation could ever fully overcome historical consciousness. This type of troubling moment in a novel is far from atypical. Unsurprisingly, given this type of generic slippage, the question whether there are distinctive Irish and Scottish variants of the Gothic has generated a large body of contemporary academic debate. In particular, ever since an “Irish Gothic” was first proposed by W.J. McCormack (McCormack 1991: 831–54), its status has generated an often volatile exchange of views as to whether such writings constitute a tradition, a genre or a mode (see Killeen 2006; Haslam 2007; Killeen 2008).

A slightly greater generic stability is given, though, if we use the period’s own term “romance” in judging fiction from Ireland and Scotland. “Romance,” according to Samuel Johnson’s dictionary, indicated “a military fable of the middle ages,” “a tale of wild adventure in war and love,” and, significantly, “a lie, a fiction” (Johnson 1755–56). As such, romance became a loaded word in historiography as well as fiction; historians, often motivated by religious or political difference, accused their rivals of writing romances, long before Scott used this term to describe his own fictional experiments in the Waverley novels. “Romance” figured as both a genre of fiction, but also as History’s deceitful Other. This was the sense in which the Irish

antiquarian Sylvester O'Halloran used it when criticizing David Hume's *History of England* (1754–61):

If, as *Tully* assures us, "History be the witness of times past, the light of truth, the life of memory, the guide of life, and herald of antiquity," we shall find Mr Hume, in his accounts of Ireland, rather a writer of romance, than of history.

(O'Halloran 1772: 277)

The nationalist historian John Curry also agreed that, when it came to the Ulster massacres, the normally reliable Hume had written "in a style better suited to romance than history" (Curry 1786: 2.213). O'Halloran was highly critical of Hume's account of the 1641 Rebellion in Ireland, an event which had a significant afterlife in Protestant memory as an example of Catholic savagery. Hume's account of Irish "barbarity" emphasized the slaughter of innocent Protestants, and the bitterness with which his history was received by Irish Catholic historians demonstrated the extent to which a Whig historiography was on problematic ground when confronted with the Irish situation. The success of Walpole's "Gothick story" and the new popularity of historical romances were thus contemporary with an acrimonious debate about Irish and Scottish relations. The sectarian politics underlying both Hume and O'Halloran's accounts of history were by no means confined to Irish issues. Flashpoints for varying interpretations of historical events in Scotland might include the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and the persecution of Presbyterian Covenanters at the end of the seventeenth century, the latter, in particular, setting off anxieties about class-conflict in post-Waterloo Britain. The word "romance" thus became loaded within historiographical circles in the period, with Edward Ledwich, for instance, attacking the "bardic fictions and historical romances" of nationalist historians in an effort to present himself as a modern, enlightened reader of the past (Ledwich 1790: iii). As he himself admitted, "literary warfare seems to be the lot of Irish Antiquarian writers" (Ledwich 1790: 465), a view which would have implications for writers of historical fiction.

While Gothic fiction from Walpole onward was indulging in an anachronistic mixture of modern sentimental (proto-Protestant) heroes and heroines with feudal oppressive (explicitly Catholic) villains, sectarian tension and continuing historical conflict meant that the parameters of romance narratives in Ireland and Scotland were constantly shifting. The Catholic Highlands or Ireland could appear to the Protestant writer as particularly recalcitrant depositories of barbaric Catholic superstitions and resentments. For the historian, rhetorician and novelist Thomas Leland, Ireland remained temporally out of step with the rest of Europe. "Even after learning had revived in neighbouring nations," he preached in Dublin on an anniversary of the 1641 Rebellion, "deplorable are the instances we meet with, in the most eminent among the Prelates of this unhappy country, of monkish ignorance, and of gross and childish superstitions" (Leland 1788: 3.12). The primitiveness of the Celtic peripheries could be aesthetically intoxicating, but also threatening to modern, civilized subjects. As Jarlath Killeen has argued, confessional identities in the post-Reformation period were tied to temporal markers, with Protestantism aligning itself with a modern, rational faith:

The Reformation predicated the definition of the medieval past as Catholic, and the Catholic Church contributed to this understanding in its rejection of the modern in favour of the purity of the ancient. In such a model, however, the past (Catholicism) must be continually and repeatedly rejected for the present (Protestantism) to fully realise itself.

(Killeen 2005: 18–19)

In Ireland and Scotland, though, the project of the Reformation was incomplete, and so the Whiggish sense of historical progression that contributed to forming the Gothic as a literary and aesthetic category was troubled by a constant temporal slip from the past into the present. Representative characters for Irish and Scottish Gothic are John Melmoth from Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) and Robert Wringhim from James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824): historical figures who have a supernatural ability to step outside of the chronological confines of a progressive periodization to trouble the living present. Irish and Scottish Gothic can perhaps be best read as texts which interrogate the past and its mediation in what David Punter has termed the "necessary distortions of history" (Punter 1999: 102).

As Owenson's novel demonstrates, the Irish landscape and the visible scars of conflict provided a Gothic text in its own right. When she has her character escape the violent visibility of the remnants of 1798, she directs his gaze to a ruined abbey. William Gilpin's *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1788) contained a famous defense of English Gothic architecture, but his comment on how ruined abbeys were among "the most picturesque beauties" (Gilpin 1788: 1.18) of the English landscape must have rankled with Catholic readers who saw those same ruins as signifying a history of persecution, while Irish and Scottish Protestants would have been aware of the continuing sectarian tension to which such ruins spoke. A pristine Gothic abbey forms the background for the frontispiece for Thomas Leland's first volume of *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762) (see Figure 4.1).

The close relationship between historiography and romance can be seen in the career of Leland, a professor of history and oratory at Trinity College, Dublin. His novel predates Walpole's *Otranto* (1764), but prefigures the Gothic's interest in medievalism, illegitimacy and inheritance. *Longsword* proclaimed itself a "historical romance" on the title page, and the *Monthly Review* celebrated the novel in terms which hint at the almost oxymoronic nature of the genre: "The truth of history is artfully interwoven with agreeable fictions" (Anon. 1762: 236). Perhaps unsurprisingly for a professor of oratory, much of *Longsword* is first-person speech, as the Earl of Salisbury tells of his experiences in France and England after returning from the Crusades. As Janet Dietz Moss has argued, the period in which Leland was at Trinity saw a shift from older, classical theories of rhetoric to a newer belletristic model, with Leland closer in attitude to later Scottish rhetoricians such as Adam Smith, George Campbell and Hugh Blair (Moss 1996: 383–411). A new interest in emotional states caused by rhetorical performance drew rhetoricians toward investigating extreme psychic states such as terror. Leland's own edition of the orations of Demosthenes presented the Greek orator as an early proponent of the sublime, with the incredible effect of his speeches on audiences described in terms which were echoed by Edmund Burke's contemporaneous *An*



Figure 4.1 Frontispiece to volume I of Thomas Leland's *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (London: printed for W. Johnston, 1762)

Enquiry Concerning the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1757):

The impetuous torrent that in a moment bears down all before it; the repeated flashes of lightning, which spread universal terror, and which the strongest eye dares not encounter, are the images, by which the nature of [Demosthenes's] eloquence hath been expressed.

(Leland 1757: xxxvii)

A new interest in what might be broadly termed literary affect, audience response and the cultivation of taste accorded well with wider movements in eighteenth-century culture, and are reflected in *Longsword's* representation of not only the act

of narrating, but also the effect that narration has on the listener, in this case the Cornish knight, Sir Randolph. At various points in the first-person narration Leland interrupts the discourse to remind the reader that this speech is being received by Sir Randolph, who alternates between demonstrating emotional agitation at the events recounted and “[composing] himself into a grave and earnest attention” (Leland 1762: 1.81–82) before listening to the continuation of the narrative. While the novel opens in Cornwall, the Celtic periphery is largely incidental rather than integral to the atmosphere and story. Leland’s novel eschewed supernatural effect, and so is closer to Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778) than Walpole’s *Otranto*. It did, however, contribute to a revaluation of Gothic heritage. The frontispiece (see Figure 4.1), depicting a scene where the eponymous hero receives sanctuary from a Cistercian monk, makes a connection between the romance narrative and the carefully delineated Gothic architecture of the Abbey in the background.

In this depiction of a supine, vulnerable Longsword aided by a monk, we have not only an aesthetic recuperation of Gothic architecture, but also a prefiguring of Walpole and Clara Reeve’s heroes, Theodore and Edmund – male characters who embody masculine traits of courage and valor, yet who are softened by eighteenth-century investments in sentiment and sensibility. Given the role that Scottish Enlightenment philosophy played in providing an epistemological basis for celebrating sympathy and emotion as foundations of ethical and social interaction, it is not surprising that imaginative literature would investigate the scope and limits of sensibility. James Macpherson provided exemplary sentimental heroes in his Ossianic poetry from the 1760s, in which masculine valor was combined with feminine languor. As Adam Potkay notes, Macpherson “synthesises the two poles of ancient experience; feminine and masculine, private and public, *heimlich* and *unheimlich*” (Potkay 1994: 204). Ossian would have a considerable influence in romanticizing the Highlands, and Scotland as a fictional site would become associated with both bloody conflict and sentimental romance in a series of Gothic novels in the period, including Sophia Lee’s *The Recess* (1783–85), T.J. Horsley Curties’s *The Watch-Tower* (1803–4), and Ann Radcliffe’s first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), the latter’s subtitle of “A Highland Tale” already demonstrating how a once rebellious part of the island was now recuperable as a landscape of romantic adventure. While the Ossianic poems may have enjoyed wide popularity and presented a softened view of Celtic placidity, they were the cause of another bitter contention between Scottish and Irish antiquarians about their provenance (O’Halloran, 2004).

As if aware of the contentious rivalry between Ireland and Scotland over the original poetry upon which Macpherson based his epics, Regina Maria Roche has her heroine encounter an Ossianic bard on the neutral midway Celtic location of North Wales in *The Children of the Abbey* (1796). The Welsh landscape provides a setting which suits Amanda Fitzalan’s disposition “which delighted equally in the sublime and the beautiful” (Roche 1796: 1.5). In this Burkean landscape Ossian is denuded of national rivalry, and Amanda, the daughter of an Irish soldier and Scottish noblewoman, is able to act as a model of the sentimental reader of Celtic romance:

The venerable appearance of the musician, the simple melody of his harp, recalled to Amanda’s recollection the tales of other times, in which she had so

often delighted: it sent her soul back to the ages of old, to the days of other years, when bards rehearsed the exploits of heroes, and sung the praises of the dead.

(Roche 1796: 1.10)

Roche's aesthetic landscape, however, is in its own way charged with historical remembrance. Ossianic appreciation as figured in the above passage is, after all, bound up with a type of involuntary sympathy of the soul with the past. Ruined abbeys provide a Gilpin-inflected version of the picturesque, with "Gothic" ruins found in every landscape visited, showing "the vestiges of that monkish superstition" that erected them. But Roche has her hero Mortimer inhabit "Tudor Hall," aligning him with the historical moment in which those abbeys moved from historical agency to aesthetic appreciation.

Just as Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels can be read as continental travelogues, so Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* performs a similar function for the peripheral areas of the British Isles, presenting landscapes suffused with Celtic romance but ultimately brought into sync with a modern Protestant British consciousness. While *The Children of the Abbey* may not have revolutionized the structure or generic conventions of romance narratives, it contributed to the popularization of Irish, Welsh and Scottish settings, and reinforced the romanticization of the Celtic periphery. As Katie Trumpener suggests, the characters' crisscrossing between Ireland, Scotland and Wales demonstrated that "London [was] no longer the centre of novelistic consciousness" (Trumpener 1997: 17). It also marked a significant shift in Roche's own literary career. As one of the most popular novels by an Irish author in the nineteenth century, it led Roche to attempt to build on her success with imitations (and occasional plagiarisms) of Ann Radcliffe in a series of novels. These included the recognizably more Gothic *Clermont* (1798), which has the dubious distinction of being listed as one of the "horrid novels" mentioned by Isabella Thorpe in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Her later fiction, starting with *The Munster Cottage Boy* (1820), marks a shift into regional fiction, although this attention to location had been present in her earlier work, and as a whole, her career, as Christina Morin points out, challenges neat generic divisions between such forms as the Gothic novel and National tale (Morin 2011: 184).

The 1790s saw rapid politicization in Ireland and Scotland, and the sectarian conflicts of the Gothic gained a topical edge. The villain's written confession in Stephen Cullen's *The Castle of Inchvally* (1796) provides both a rational explanation for the supernatural effects (complete with footnotes to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s entry on phosphorus), and a clear statement of identification with the United Irishman project. Having cleared his conscience, the priest delivers a peroration on the need for a repeal of the penal laws, the liberalization of the Catholic Church and mutual tolerance and respect between the different confessional communities in Ireland:

That time, I trust and foresee, will soon arrive, when toleration shall be preached by a divine of [the Catholic Church], whose genius and liberal principles shall make him the talk of nations – and when a true Christian preacher, a bigot to no sect, a friend to all, and a scourge to the preachers of dissension, shall arise, and,

with the splendour of his talents and the purity of his doctrines, crush the system of disunion which has made Irishmen slaves – make them unite in one body for mutual support and vindication of their rights, and shew the crooked politicians, who divide but to trample on them, that they are but one people, and will have but one fate.

(Cullen 1796: 3.283–85)

The explanation of supernatural effects in the Radcliffean Gothic suited the Enlightenment project of the United Irishmen, who sought to combine the rational political and epistemological projects of the *philosophes* with the utilization of popular culture. The actual United Irish rebellion of 1798 would itself become wrapped in a discourse of atrocity, with opposing sides quick to point out the savagery of the Other. United Irishmen were aware of the role of affect in creating a convincing political discourse. While a young Wolfe Tone may have parodied excessive sentimentality in a burlesque like *Castle Belmont: or, suffering sensibility* (1790), other United Irishmen were intrigued by a Gothic rhetoric of persecution and physical and psychological torment. While many of the United Irishmen read and appreciated William Godwin's political works, they most often return to his fiction. Henry Joy McCracken, attempting to describe prison, wrote in a letter of 1797: "if you wish for a true picture of the inside of a jail read 2nd chap, 2. Vol. of *Caleb Williams*" (quoted in Fitzhenry 1936: 101). While William Drennan may have considered *St Leon* to be "very stupid with much fine writing thrown away on meagre fact" (Luddy 1999: 610), others read his fictional work avidly, with the United Irishman John Daly Burke writing a Gothic play, *Bethlem Gabor: Lord of Transylvania* (1807), while in exile in America.

Cullen's rational Gothic aligned with *The Northern Star*, the Belfast newspaper of the United Irishmen. The paper adopted a modern tone, reproducing, for instance, Robert Burns's "An Address to the People of Scotland" with an introduction that valued the poem's ethnographic fidelity while bemoaning the uneducated state of the rural Ayrshire population:

The ideas in this, like the rest of Mr Burns's productions, are singular and eccentric, and exhibit a just picture of the sentiments of the low peasantry of Scotland, respecting any gentleman who is professedly an Antiquarian – He is deemed to be in colleague with SATAN, and to be a dealer in magic and the BLACK ART, a vulgar prejudice, which all the light and learning of the present day, have not yet been able totally to eradicate.

(Anon. 1792: 7)

Sir Walter Scott would return continuously throughout his writing career to Burns's "Address," citing it as an epigraph to both *Tales of My Landlord* (1816) and *The Monastery* (1820), and throughout his novels he would present the work of the historical novelist as a form of necromancy. The famous "Dedicatory Epistle" to *Ivanhoe* (1819) describes the Author of the Waverley novels as "a Scottish magician . . . at liberty to walk over the field of battle, and to select for the subject of resuscitation by his sorceries, a body whose limbs had recently quivered with existence" (Scott 1996: 15). Historical memory is turned into an almost unholy exercise, and

the novelist's art a form of magic that thrives on the violence endemic to Scottish history. Scott's citation of Burns throughout his work recognizes the role that the earlier poet had in popularizing a rich store of popular traditions and superstitions. While Gilpin and Roche were using ruined Gothic abbeys as sites of melancholic aesthetic contemplation, Burns's "Tam O'Shanter" (1791) presented Kirk Alloway as the location of a bacchanalian Witches' Sabbath. Burns's extravagant use of folk superstition combined with dialect speech would have a profound effect on subsequent Scottish fiction dealing with the uncanny, from Scott's "Wandering Willie's Tale" (1824) to Robert Louis Stevenson's "Thrawn Janet" (1887). Ghosts, witches and satanic pacts could now be presented as part of a wider anthropological project of understanding the survival of primitive cultural remains in the present day. This "folk Gothic" would become particularly popular in both Ireland and Scotland in the 1820s and onward, both as a theme in fiction and as a way of justifying an indulgence in supernatural effect.

Alongside folk superstition, however, one might witness a wider move in the Gothic toward a confessional mode in which psychological wholeness is threatened by "creating doubles, unsettling histories, and fracturing temporality" (Kilfeather 2004: 58). Charles Maturin's first work, *Fatal Revenge* (1806), takes its epigraph from Lucian: "I wished not merely to see *cities* and *woods* as one can see them in maps but *men*, and *what they* do, and *what they* say." It is a telling phrase, and immediately differentiates Maturin's fiction from the picturesque landscapes of Radcliffe and Roche. Maturin is immediately signaling his interest in individual psychology, moving the interest away from exterior description to interiority. For Scott, reviewing the novel in 1810, this was a "chaotic novel romance" (Scott 1810: 347), a mixed generic form that combined psychological realism with improbable events. Fiction in the new decades would examine psychological collapse, and the burden of historical trauma on individuals caught up in events that rob them of agency.

Gothic elements proliferate in the work of Sydney Owenson (*The Wild Irish Girl*, 1806) and in such Scottish novelists as Jane Porter (*The Scottish Chiefs*, 1810) and Mary Brunton (*Self-Control*, 1811 and *Discipline*, 1814). While generically different, all three novelists took elements from romance narratives, such as romanticized landscapes, historical conflict and persecuted or pursued heroines. The connection between the Celtic periphery and Gothic romance was so firmly set in the early nineteenth century that it already attracted bathetic satire. In Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui* (1808), a dissipated Anglo-Irish landlord returns to his Irish castle:

The state tower, in which, after reiterated entreaties, I was left alone to repose, was hung with magnificent, but ancient tapestry. It was so like a room in a haunted castle, that if I had not been too much fatigued to think of any thing, I should certainly have thought of Mrs Radcliffe. I am sorry to say that I have no mysteries, or even portentous omens, to record of this night; for the moment that I lay down in my antiquated bed, I fell into a profound sleep.

(Edgeworth 1992: 179)

Edgeworth's hero may not find himself drawn into a romance, but he does find himself implicated in the far more threatening 1798 Rebellion. Reality again outweighs Gothic as a threat to individual safety.

Charles Maturin would also confront rebellion in his 1812 *The Milesian Chief*, a novel which proclaims itself a “Romance” on the title page, but which weakly attempts to claim authenticity through exclusive footnotes to the fiercely anti-romantic Ledwich. Maturin’s preface provided one of his most famous comments on his own powers, and marked a link between Gothic and Ireland based not on romantic primitivism, but on psychological breakdown in the face of still-existing religious and political conflict:

If I possess any talent, it is that of darkening the gloomy, and of deepening the sad; of painting life in extremes, and representing those struggles of passion when the soul trembles on the verge of the unlawful and the unhallowed . . . I have chosen my own country for the scene, because I believe it the only country on earth, where, from the strange existing opposition of religion, politics, and manners, the extremes of refinement and barbarism are united, and the most wild and incredible situations of romantic story are hourly passing before modern eyes.

(Maturin 1812: I.iv–v)

Maturin would return to the consequences of the mixing of religion and politics, as well as the deep psychological trauma inflicted both by fanaticism and history. This is, as Ina Ferris points out, writing “that recognizes itself as a form of undoing” (Ferris 2002: 102). The horrors of incarceration and religious fanaticism percolate Maturin’s fiction, where “the impression on the senses [begins] to defy the power of reason to resist them” (Maturin 1968: 53).

The psychic strains of history and religion would be investigated by two exemplary Gothic novels of the early nineteenth century: Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) and James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). Both would invoke “romance” as a generic category, but only to undermine that very term. A party of Edinburgh literati travels through “a romantic and now classical” (Hogg 2002: 169) Scottish Border territory, but Hogg’s novel subverts such landscape descriptors by unearthing a preserved corpse from an earlier period. Maturin’s novel gestures to the “Radcliffe-Romance” but outdoes it in psychological terror, for the actual experience of horror remains unspeakable even in a Gothic-saturated culture:

Romances have made your country, Sir, familiar with tales of subterranean passages, and supernatural horrors. All these, painted by the most eloquent pen, must fall short of the breathless horror felt by a being engaged in an enterprise beyond his powers, experience, or calculation.

(Maturin 1968: 191)

In *Melmoth*, the title-character has been given unnaturally long life by a Faustian pact, allowing him to become “the subject of written memoirs, and the theme of traditional history” (Maturin 1968: 397). The unnamed Editor in Hogg’s narrative opens by relying on “tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant” (Hogg 2002: 3). Written and oral testimonies both remain unable to capture the full darkness of history. Both Melmoth and Wringhim make pacts with the devil, but

the actual blasphemous prayer each makes remains unrecorded. Historical memory can be transmitted in many ways, but the satanic kernel of Irish and Scottish historical experience remains an unspoken, unwritten psychic burden on the present. Hogg's Editor, a benign Scott-like Tory, reveals the limits of the present day to understand the past: "With regard to the work itself, I dare not venture a judgement, for I do not understand it" (Hogg 2002: 174). Ian Duncan's comments on Hogg's short story "Adam Bell" (1825) are apposite here: "The disturbing force of Hogg's brief story comes from its breaching of a narrative space between the traditional domains of romance and history, only to leave that space . . . opaque, impenetrable by our reading" (quoted in Hogg 2002: 179). Maturin's and Hogg's novels investigate the moment when religious and historical conflict creates an "incarcerated mind" (Maturin 1968: 56) or a schizophrenic "second self" (Hogg 2002: 106).

In 1824, Thomas Moore's *Memoirs of Captain Rock* was published. A generically hybrid book, it contains a manuscript from the titular Irish rebel given to an English missionary, in which history is encountered in Gothic terms as the site of the endless repetition of "the usual quantum of horrors" (Moore 2008: 54). Having read the manuscript, the missionary becomes convinced of the need to reform "the Rulers, not the People of Ireland," but when he details this to his fellow missionaries he finds that "the only result of my communication to them has been a romance by Miss —, on the story of Captain Rock, which is, at present, I understand, in the printer's hands" (Moore 2008: 53, 54).

Irish and Scottish writers were instrumental in creating a historically conscious fiction, but also in realizing that the machinery of romance fell short of the Gothic horror of history. In Banim's satirical account of Scott's indebtedness to the Gothic we can hear an early prefiguring of James Joyce's nightmare of history, and underneath the historical novel we can hear what Maturin calls "the diabolical eloquence of horror" (Maturin 1968: 58).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Niall Gillespie for bringing to my attention some of the Godwin references cited in this chapter.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1762) "Review of *Longsword*," *Monthly Review*, 26: 236.
— (1792) "Muses Retreat," *The Northern Star*, April 14–16.
Banim, J. (1824) *Revelations of the Dead-Alive*, London.
Cox, W. (1810) "Editor's Address," *The Irish Magazine, or Monthly Asylum for Neglected Biography*, January 3.
Cullen, S. (1796) *The Castle of Inchvally*, 3 vols, London.
Curry, J. (1786) *An Historical and Critical Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland, From the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the Settlement Under King William*, 2 vols, London.
Duncan, I. (1992) *Modern Romance and the Transformation of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Edgeworth, M. (1992) *Castle Rackrent and Ennui*, 1800 and 1809, ed. M. Butler, London: Penguin.

- Ferris, I. (2002) *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fitzhenry, E.C. (1936) *Henry Joy McCracken*, Dublin: Talbot Press.
- Gamer, M. (2000) *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilpin, W. (1788) *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772*, 2 vols, London.
- Haslam, R. (2007) “Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach,” *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 2. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://irish-gothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/IrishGothicHaslam.html>> (accessed September 1, 2012).
- Hogg, J. (2002) *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, ed. P.D. Garside, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Johnson, S. (1755–56) *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols, London.
- Kilfeather, S. (2004) “Terrific Register: The Gothicization of Atrocity in Irish Romanticism,” *boundary 2* 3.1: 49–71
- Killeen, J. (2005) *Gothic Ireland: Horror and the Irish Anglican Imagination in the Long Eighteenth Century*, Dublin: Four Courts Press.
- (2006) “Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction,” *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 1. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath.html>> (accessed September 1, 2012).
- (2008) “Irish Gothic Revisited,” *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 4. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath-response.html>> (accessed September 1, 2012).
- Ledwich, E. (1790) *Antiquities of Ireland*, Dublin.
- Leland, T. (1757) *All the Orations of Demosthenes Pronounced to Excite the Athenians Against Philip of Macedon*, 2nd edn, London.
- (1762) *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury*, 2 vols, London.
- (1788) *Sermons on Various Subjects*, 3 vols, London.
- Luddy M. (gen. ed.) (1999) *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, 3 vols, Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission.
- McCormack, W.J. (1991) “Irish Gothic and After, 1820–1945,” in S. Deane (gen. ed.) *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols, Derry: Field Day, 2: 831–54.
- Maturin, C. (1812) *The Milesian Chief*, 4 vols, London.
- (1968) *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 1820, ed. D. Grant, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, T. (1808) *Corruption and Intolerance*, London.
- (2008) *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, 1824, ed. E. Nolan, Dublin: Field Day.
- Morin, C. (2011) “Gothic and National? Challenging The Formal Distinctions of Irish Romantic Fiction,” in J. Kelly (ed.) *Ireland and Romanticism: Publics, Nations, and Scenes of Cultural Production*, London: Palgrave, 172–88.
- Moss, J.D. (1996) “Discordant Consensus: Old and New Rhetoric at Trinity College Dublin,” *Rhetorica: a journal of the history of rhetoric*, 14.4: 383–411.
- O’Halloran, C. (2004) *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, c. 1750–1800*, Cork: Cork University Press.
- O’Halloran, S. (1772) *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland, in Which the Assertions of Mr Hume and Other Writers are Occasionally Considered*, London.
- Owenson, S. (1818) *Florence McCarthy*, 4 vols, London.
- Potkay, A. (1994) *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Punter, D. (1999) "Heartlands: Contemporary Scottish Gothic," *Gothic Studies*, 1:1: 101–18.
- Robertson, F. (1994) *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Roche, R.M. (1796) *The Children of the Abbey*, 4 vols, London.
- Scott, W. (1810) "Review of *Fatal Revenge*," *Quarterly Review*, 3: 339–47.
- (1996) *Ivanhoe*, 1820, ed. I. Duncan, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trumpener, K. (1997) *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

FURTHER READING

- Backus, M. (1999) *The Gothic Family Romance: Heterosexuality, Child Sacrifice, and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Psychoanalytical study of warped family dynamics in Irish Gothic literature.)
- Cahalan, J.M. (1983) *Great Hatred, Little Room: The Irish Historical Novel*, Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press. (Considers two centuries of the Irish historical novel.)
- Connolly, C. (2011) *A Cultural History of the Irish Novel, 1790–1829*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A thorough study of different fictional genres of the period, including Gothic.)
- Davis, L., Duncan, I., and Sorenson, J. (eds) (2004) *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Useful background survey of Scottish writing in the period.)
- Duncan, I. (2007) *In Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Includes essays on the work of Hogg and its relation to Scott, the historical novel and Gothic fiction.)
- Gibbons, L. (2004) *Gaelic Gothic: Race, Colonization, and Irish Culture*, Galway: Arlen House. (Examines how Celtic primitivism merged with racial politics to create a Gothic register in writing about Ireland.)
- Kelly, J. (ed.) (2011) *Ireland and Romanticism: Publics, Nations, and Scenes of Cultural Production*, London: Palgrave. (Contains a number of essays on Irish fiction, and on the use of Gothic effects in political/popular discourse.)
- Lukács, G. (1989) *The Historical Novel*, trans. and eds H. and S. Mitchell, London: Merlin. (Influential work tracing the development of the genre.)
- Pittock, M. (2008) *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Chapter on Irish and Scottish Gothic writing.)
- (ed.) (2011) *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (Useful survey chapters on Scott, Hogg and the Scottish national tale.)

CHAPTER FIVE

BRITISH GOTHIC NATIONHOOD,
1760–1830

—♦—

Justin D. Edwards

The “locality” of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as “other” in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new “people” in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation.

Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (1990: 4)

In his introduction to *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha asserts that a nation’s “coming into being” is tied to narratives of identity and unity: the nation is a “system of cultural signification” that represents social life rather than “the discipline of polity” (Bhabha 1990: 5). From this perspective, the construction of narratives about nations “lose their origins in the myths of time” (Bhabha 1990: 1), so that literary language merges with political agendas as the nation arises as a powerful idea in the North Atlantic. The nation, then, is an unstable territory. It is simultaneously familiarized and defamiliarized in language so that instead of stabilizing knowledge it foregrounds the instabilities of knowledge about space, place and identity. “The emergence of the political ‘rationality’ of the nation as a form of narrative,” Bhabha writes, is disseminated through “textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, sub-texts and figurative stratagems” that are not monolithic but present in the particular contexts of historical moments (Bhabha 1990: 5). Here, Bhabha builds on Benedict Anderson’s classic study of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, first published in 1983, which traces the origins of the rise of national consciousness to the modern-industrial age of the Enlightenment in western Europe. Following the demise of traditional, hierarchical forms of social organization associated with Christendom, Anderson attributes a major role of nationhood to economic factors that helped spread supposedly universal, homogenous and “horizontal-secular” notions of national space, territoriality, and citizenship (Anderson 1991: 37). For Anderson, the nation is built on a conception of a community that is socially

constructed, or “imagined” into being: “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity-genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 1991: 6). Anderson stresses the significance of creative imagery, invented traditions, representation, imagination, symbols and traditions in nationalism as a constructed narrative about the nation-state. Thus, Anderson’s approach to the nation debunks myths about nationalism that assume the nation possesses some primordial essence. For as a phenomenon that is fundamentally historical in its constitution, the “truth” of national identity cannot be found in fixed racial categories, myths about origins, or certain primordial “facts.”

The Gothic novel in English arises alongside new forms of political nationalism in Europe. The American Revolution (1776), the French Revolution (1793–1802), the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), as well as wars fought between European nations, contributed to the promotion of specific narratives about nationhood and national identity. The notions of having a shared language, culture, race, ethnicity or religion played key roles in the dissemination of a symbolic, metonymic and territorial conception of national unity. Indeed, from the mid-eighteenth century through to the early nineteenth century, the nation in Europe became conceptualized and re-conceptualized through symbols, flags, music, anthems, painting, sculpture, poetry, fiction, architecture and the performing arts. Nations in this period, such as England and France, defined themselves in opposition to each other according to their ideological differences.

Some literary critics have pointed to the rise of British nationhood in early Gothic texts. Robert Miles, for instance, draws on Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection to argue that “one of the most powerful, and fundamental, determinants of the Gothic” is the “relationship between the horrific and nationalism” (Miles 2001: 47). For Miles, the Gothic’s manifest relationship to the rise of nationalism must be seen in relation to the emergence of nationalist ideologies. Likewise, Fred Botting writes that Gothic forms arose during significant shifts in class and gender, as well as social, political and economic changes. “All areas of British society were rendered unstable,” Botting states,

as were its ways of representing and regulating itself according to rational and moral principles . . . It is in this context that Gothic fiction can be said to blur rather than distinguish the boundaries that regulated social life, and interrogate, rather than restore, any imagined continuity between past and present, nature and culture, reason and passion, individuality and family and society.

(Botting 1996: 47)

Indeed, the publication dates of early Gothic fiction – Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Clara Reeve’s *The Champion of Virtue* (1777) and Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) – mark vital moments in the history and imagined conception of British nationhood. Following the Seven Years’ War, the British victory expanded conceptions of the nation and nationalism to include vast territories in Asia and a large Catholic population in Quebec. “1764, 1778, 1789 – beyond literary history, these dates commemorate tidal shifts in the nature, composition, and prospects of Great Britain,” argues Toni Wein, and this “challenged dearly-held

myths about the nature of the British people as Protestant, commercial, and liberty-loving” (Wein 2002: 2).

One of the striking historical movements in the rise of British nationalism occurs through its opposition to France and the construction of difference – Otherness – between the two nations. The French Other provided an oppositional sense of national identity against which Britain could define itself. The French Revolutionary Wars (1793–1802), which began after France declared war on its bordering nations, Austria and Prussia, were followed by the Napoleonic Wars, which began between Britain and France. These wars were unique in mapping nationalism across Europe: Britain and other nations were marshaled to a national cause that was far more widespread than in previous wars. Unprecedented numbers chose to take up arms, and the civilians of Britain played significant roles in protecting the nation from potential invasion. Within the ideological conflict of these wars, the people of Britain focused on what it meant to be British, often in opposition to what they imagined it meant to be French. In fact, Timothy Baycroft (1998) argues in *Nationalism in Europe, 1789–1945* that the French Revolution was the birth of the modern nation, for it marked the formation of a new nation-state, a new republic that replaced the idea of a divinely ordained law regulated by the king.

It is in this context that the notion of British nationhood, the imaginary impression of a coherent and unified Britain, develops in relation to its continental counterparts. But even as the nation was embroiled in conflicts with European nations, it was expanding its empire beyond its borders, politically dominating foreign territories and consuming the natural resources of distant lands. British colonization in parts of the Americas, Asia and other regions fuelled a sense of national pride and contributed to a clearer notion of Britishness: the differences between “us” and “them,” colonizer and colonized, British and non-British were reinforced by clearly defined perceptions of Otherness. But even while it propped up discourses of difference, the colonies of the British Empire were also conceptualized, often incorrectly, as an extension of the nation. “The British,” writes Thomas Richards in *The Imperial Archive*, “liked to talk about their empire as if it was an extended nation,” and “seeing it that way, through the distorted lens of the nation, lent the Empire the sense of symbolic unity that it so often lacked in practice” (Richards 1993: 3).

Sir Robert Walpole (1767–1745), a strong advocate of national unity and the father of Horace Walpole, was an influential Whig politician and traditionally regarded as the first Prime Minister. In fact, the Walpole family had long been involved in national politics: Sir Robert’s father (Horace’s grandfather) had also been an influential Whig, and a supporter of the 1688–89 Glorious Revolution which resulted in a British constitutional monarchy. Horace Walpole followed in the political footsteps of his father and grandfather: in 1741 he was elected Whig Member of Parliament for Callington, Cornwall, a seat which he held for 13 years. Then from 1754 to 1768, following the Jacobite Rising, Horace Walpole was a Member for Castle Rising and a supporter of national unity under a strong parliamentary monarchy. In fact, in his home in Strawberry Hill he hung a copy of the warrant for the execution of Charles I and asserted that the murder of the King was a justifiable act that had paved the way for a resilient British nation.

Walpole’s interest in national politics is woven into *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Set in the Middle Ages, a period seen as distinct from the eighteenth-century age of

Enlightenment, the historical setting of Walpole's Gothic novel simultaneously resists and invokes the principles of an Age of Reason. The ambiguities and uncertainties conveyed in the surreal circumstances surrounding the plots of violence, incest, mystery and spectrality bring the past into the present. In fact, the questions of rightful heirs, lineage and primogeniture that pervade the novel are incorporated into a personal and political return of the repressed: the sins of the father return to haunt the son. Furthermore, critics such as Toni Wein see Walpole's interest in national politics as intricately woven into the fabric of his literary output. During the early-to-mid-1760s, Walpole became outraged when King George III dismissed Horace's cousin, Henry Seymour Conway, from his military and royal offices. In fact, Walpole commences writing *Otranto* directly after completing an irate pamphlet condemning George III for his treatment of Conway. In her reading of the novel Wein writes,

The characterization of the novel as "Gothic" points to the story's relevance for contemporary political events in England, the foundations discernable beneath the tale apply well to English history. And these resonances are no accident . . . Manfred represents, if not the person, then the actions of, George III. Manfred's exercise of artful policy to deceive his subjects could refer back to the King's deceptive description of the recently concluded treaty as an economic victory for England . . . Manfred's irrational attack on Theodore, culminating in the hero's imprisonment for making empirical observations, could be likened to George III's wilful ignoring of common law in his use of general warrants, ultimately deemed an illegal violation of individual liberty.

(Wein 2002: 55)

Wein's reading of this allusion situates *Otranto* firmly within the political debates of eighteenth-century British nationhood. At the center of this debate is a central question: who has power under a constitutional monarchy? George III's disregard for the legal basis of the British nation, the common law, is an assertion of monarchical power that overrides the powers of parliament and the courts of justice. The tyranny of the king is thus mirrored in the patriarchal tyranny of the Gothic villain: Manfred assumes absolute power and disregards the law of the land. But absolute power leads to corruption and decay and the castle collapses into a heap of stone and mortar. Out of the rubble, the nation is stabilized, for the aristocratic lineage of primogeniture is re-established, and the guilty are killed or incarcerated.

These themes of power, tyranny and nationhood are also central to what David Punter and Glennis Byron correctly identify as the "political Gothic" narrative of William Godwin's 1794 novel *Caleb Williams* (Punter and Byron 2004: 190). Set in the present rather than the medieval past, Godwin's text voices many of the ideas put forward in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), a work of political philosophy that disseminates anarchic ideals and expounds the power of reason over the imagination. The plot revolves around Williams's attempts to reveal the secret crime of his patron, Falkland, and his eventual discovery that his benefactor has murdered a neighbor named Tyrell. But Williams's knowledge is dangerous: Falkland has him stalked, imprisoned, humiliated, harassed and exiled. Williams is persecuted and policed by a wealthy man of power and prestige; his liberty is curtailed, and

there is no escape from the spectral power that haunts his actions and dominates his life. State terror sustained by the authorities, the identification of the so-called enemy within the nation, limits Williams's freedom and citizenship. From this perspective, the nation's legal system is not necessarily transparent, nor does it inevitably strive toward the abstract principles of impartiality and justice. Terror is imposed on those who seek to reveal the truth and unveil the mysteries of criminal action.

Striving to conceptualize an ideal nation based on liberty and justice, the dystopic scenes of *Caleb Williams* relate to the political debates surrounding the suppression of freedom within the nation and the powers of the state. In 1794, for instance, Prime Minister Pitt suspended *habeas corpus*, leading to the arrest of London radicals thought to espouse Jacobin ideals, as well as those who were considered to be sympathetic to the early political principles of the French Revolution. Among those arrested were Godwin's friends and associates, John Horne Tooke and John Thelwall, and when the famous Treason Trials were initiated in the autumn of 1794 the "Jacobin" writer Thomas Holcroft, a close friend of Godwin, was summonsed to appear before the court (Hindle 1987: xi). Labeling writers like Holcroft, Godwin, Wollstonecraft and others as "English Jacobins" had the effect of making them appear to be an organized political movement that was a threat to the government and the stability of the nation. Discursively fashioned as far more organized than they were, the enemies of the political radicals branded them as anti-patriotic and created political factions, best illustrated by the anti-Jacobin literature of the period as well as by the constant threat of arrest and legal sanction. It is in this context that we might read the many arrests, court scenes and trials of Godwin's novel growing "out of the political milieu of which the trials are the clearest historical expression" (Ousby 1974: 49). The novel, then, is partly a condemnation of the Pitt Government and those authorities that limit freedom of expression in the name of treason, betrayal or national security. *Caleb Williams* thus puts the apparatus of state-employed authorities on trial, accusing despotic power, tyranny and those who curtail the rights of individuals as unjust. By extension, the nation of Great Britain must uphold justice, equity and the freedom of individual citizenship.

Gothic novels of the period did not only explore British nationhood from within the nation. Texts such as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) promise to reveal the secrets of foreign nationalities for their English readers. A cosmopolitan traveller who held large plantations in Jamaica, Lewis sets his Gothic text in a medievalized Spain, pitting the progressive democracy of a modern England against a pre-modern Catholic nation that is projected as Other. It is from this perspective that Marie-José Tienhooven argues that *The Monk* "performs the English nation" by attempting to construct an imaged sense of national unity "through the hierarchical appropriation of a colonized Other" (Tienhooven 1997: 7). Indeed, within the space of Madrid, foreignness and the past are represented as that which is alien to the modern English nation. Otherness, then, is absorbed into the national imaginary; readers are encouraged to see the monk's Gothic villainy as autocratic and despotic and, as such, he embodies that which is antithetical to liberty, freedom and equality. In this, Spain is a place defined by difference and Otherness, a place where the stereotyped Spaniard, Ambrosio, is a corrupt and lawless Catholic who is said to be at home in a "city where superstition reigns with . . . despotic sway" (Tienhooven 1997: 7). For English readers, then, Ambrosio

can be relegated to the annals of history: he lies in sharp contrast to the progressive politics of England, and he can be demonized as the unethical Catholic, a demonization that displaces him from the seemingly ethical principles of the Church of England.

Likewise, in *The Italian*, the English traveller in Italy is given a manuscript, the title of which promises to reveal the truth of Italianness and, by extension, its difference from Britishness. Radcliffe anticipated that the English reader would enjoy this performance. And of course she was right: the novel garnered her the huge sum of £800 and confirmed her literary celebrity. Exoticism and the depictions of the Other were part of its appeal but the novel is as much about modern England as it is about pre-modern Italy, for Radcliffe places her work firmly within the late-eighteenth-century English literary canon; not only does the title and narrative echo *The Monk*, but the chapters begin with epigraphs from, among others, Shakespeare, Milton, Walpole and Gray. The Otherness that is promised in the title is thus complicated by its location within Radcliffe's literary aspirations within the British nation. Yet foreignness populates *The Italian*. Alien backdrops combine with unfamiliar socio-political and religious landscapes that are comprised of monasteries, convents, Catholic churches and the prisons of the Inquisition. The Gothic villains are defined by Otherness: their physical features and social conducts are estranged from English experience, and such discourses of difference also construct a sense of Britishness, for the fundamental opposition between the heroine and villain contributes to a sense of English national identity.

"*The Italian*," writes Cannon Schmitt, "belongs to a period of particular importance in the formation of the English nation and the elaboration of a concept of English national identity" (Schmitt 1994: 855). Indeed, the novel represents its heroine as an incarnation of Englishness, and "it employs a device enabled by eighteenth-century travel writing but nonetheless specifically attributable to the Gothic: the fictional presentation of foreign landscapes and foreign villains as anti-types, exempla of otherness" (Schmitt 1994: 855). From this perspective, the foreignness of the text functions didactically to instruct the English subject how to behave. Like the conduct book, it provides models of deportment for the English lady and conveys, through its demonization of the Italian villain, the proper conduct for an English gentleman. The construction of English national identity is part of this textual practice wherein the narrative expresses what is improper and un-English when it comes to social conventions, communal responsibilities, gender roles, as well as matters of conduct and deportment. The values communicated in *The Italian* thus contribute to the constitution of bourgeois subjectivity by disseminating, through techniques of terror, the need to police the self. "In the context of England in the 1790s," Schmitt concludes, "*The Italian*'s deployment of these techniques is at the same time a deployment of a technology of nationality that aims at the formation, not simply of a bourgeois subject, but more particularly of that gendered national subject known as the 'Englishwoman'" (Schmitt 1994: 855).

The appeal of exoticism is a vital part of Gothic literary production during this period. As in travel narratives, foreignness is embedded in representations of Otherness and national difference for an English readership. Gothic techniques and stories of travel to distant lands are central to William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), an orientalist tale of terror that revolves around Caliph Vathek's devotion to the

gratification of the senses. An avid traveller and scholar of European and Arabic languages, Beckford also served as a Member of Parliament for Wells, a post that inspired him to participate in national debates and compose two satiric novels attacking the Pitt Government and the war with France. Perhaps inspired by his extensive travels, Beckford incorporates a journey into *Vathek*: the Caliph travels to the halls of Eblis or Hell, a journey that is inspired by his curiosity and his seemingly unquenchable thirst for knowledge and discovery. Sardonicly invoking a literary tradition of Gothic journeys, Beckford's tale inverts ethical values and subverts the Enlightenment principles of discovery, reason, logic and rationality: the traveller journeys through a terrifying, dark world that threatens to destroy him. On this terrain, the traveller does not gain enlightenment; rather, he is consumed by the darkness of the shadowy cave or the gloomy grotto or the terrifying abyss that threatens to engulf him.

This combination of Gothic modes and travel texts also enables Beckford to depict characters participating in transgressive acts that are heterodox or prohibited at home. For instance, in the *Episodes*, which Beckford intended to become part of *Vathek*, the excessive consumption of the protagonist extends outward to include same-sexuality, incest and necrophilia. These acts of transgression are manifestations of a grotesque corporality that is then inscribed on the foreign bodies of Others. Indeed, the novel includes many grotesque figures: fifty one-eyed, mute black servants, various ghouls, several eunuchs, and scenes involving skeletons and mummies. These bizarre creatures are introduced by the mad and weird Giaour, whose influence over *Vathek* drives the protagonist far beyond the bounds of human decency as he commits horrific atrocities to attain eternal sensual completion. Described as a grotesque stranger, the Giaour is so abominably hideous that the very guards who arrest him are forced to shut their eyes as they lead him to the dungeons. The physicality of a foreign body that hurts the eyes is repeated in the corruptions of human behavior to represent ethical disorder and the chaos of the human condition, and this unruliness is reflected in the text's exotic setting. At a crucial moment, a grotesque sage, a heavy-drinking, anti-Islamic palm-tree climber, leads Zulkais, who has confessed a passionate physical attraction to her brother, into a cavernous grotto surrounded by reptiles with human faces. This foreign place of terror is paved with flesh-cultured marble that is marked with the veins and arteries of the human body. Human heads grow out of lizard-like forms and the rock-face appears to have human innards: the animals and the caverns are physically anthropomorphized. Indeed, the grotto is, like the labyrinth or the crypt, a disorienting and threatening place that inflames anxiety and fear. It is also a potential place of spatial internment that echoes the state of being confined within the walls of a wholly foreign, disorienting and unfamiliar place.

At the beginning of an era of British nationalism, the activities and accounts of travel to foreign lands provided cultural comparisons that were important in conceptualizing distant nation-states. British travellers, whether they were genuine travellers or just of the armchair type, participated in a repetitive process of defining and scrutinizing differences, ready to integrate certain aspects of a foreign culture, and rejecting others in order to underline the borders of British selfhood. It is within this context that Gothic invokes discourses of difference that distinguish "us" from "them," foreign from familiar, to create a domestic subject. The homely place of the

nation is, in other words, juxtaposed with the unhomely spaces of foreignness, which are by contrast seen as mysterious, enigmatic and shrouded in darkness. Inspiring a mix of terror and delight, an attraction to exoticism and a simultaneous repulsion from difference, the Gothic representation of the foreign land figures in our ability to conceptualize Otherness. In this, Gothic writing about foreign lands can serve as a tool of colonial expansion, reinforcing colonial rule by instituting the imaginary borders separating savagery from gentility, brutality from civilization. Within this process, though, the foreign always presses against the borders and an invasion seems imminent. Tabish Khair clearly asserts this when he writes that the “Gothic’s concern with excess and transgression, its ambivalence, the tense dialectic of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘self’ and ‘Other’ within which the genre achieves its elusive definition, as well as the fact that British narratives that took place out in the ‘empire’ naturally gravitated . . . towards Gothic under the impetus of colonial definitions of the colonized” (Khair 2009: 8).

An interesting example of this is *Zofloya; or, the Moor* (1806) by Charlotte Dacre (born Charlotte King). In terms of the national political landscape of Dacre’s life, her father was a radical and self-made Jewish banker Jonathan King (born Jacob Rey) who opposed conservative views, supported radical reforms and associated with Godwin, Byron and Shelley. Known in London society as “Jew King,” Dacre’s father imparted a sense of Jewish identity to his daughter but she did not necessarily share his political views. In 1815, Dacre married Nicholas Byrne, the Tory editor of *The Morning Post*, and in 1806 she wrote a poem celebrating the political career of William Pitt and lampooned the radical views of Pitt’s adversaries. The complexities surrounding her political affiliations and politics, radical, conservative, Jewish, can be read alongside the ambiguities of *Zofloya*, a novel that includes contradictory and irresolute depictions of a strong woman and a devilish black man.

Set in fifteenth-century Italy, the protagonist, Victoria, pursues her desire for wealth and power. She is unwavering in her determination: she seduces, deceives, tortures and murders to get what she wants. Consumed by sexual desire and the will to power, she moves from Gothic heroine to Gothic villain and, in this movement, her body becomes more robust, resilient, strong and masculine. The gender politics embedded in this transformation occur alongside her attraction to a Moorish servant, Zofloya, who was once a persecuted slave. A relationship that crosses class and racial taboos, the black body of the servant becomes increasingly attractive: his eyes are entrancing, his mouth is magnetic, his voice is enthralling, his body is irresistible. This depiction of the exotic and erotic North African invokes orientalist fantasies, but the text also reinscribes racist discourses when it is revealed that Zofloya is really the devil in disguise. Indeed, throughout the text the attractive charm of the Moor’s appearance is intertwined with a repulsion that is inspired by the enigmatic mystery of his difference. He is simultaneously “majestic” and “inferior,” “beautiful” and “inscrutable,” “graceful” and “overpowering” (Dacre 1997: 227, 237). For an eighteenth-century English readership, such a depiction of the black body reinscribes the binaries associated with Occident/Orient, Black/White, African/European and Muslim/Christian that enclose the Other within the identificatory and discursive structures of alterity. Indeed, the simultaneously attractive and repulsive characteristics of the Moor cast him as unknowable and, as such, he remains outside of a

Eurocentric ontology that can only react with various value judgments that relegate him to the margins of that which is comprehensible.

Tabish Khair offers a compelling reading of alterity and Otherness in the Gothic novel. In the eighteenth century, he asserts, English writers and readers

found themselves in a world of many invasions, ambiguities, uncertainties, all of which were brought home to them not only by their knowledge of Empire but also by the physical presence of Empire in metropolitan spaces in England. This presence was difficult to understand or comprehend; its difference could only be comprehended in the nature of Otherness.

(Khair 2009: 41–42)

The transformation of the Moor's body (from black man to Lucifer) and the metamorphosis of Victoria's corporeality (becoming increasingly masculine and darker) call attention to the fluidity of bodies not as fixed corporeal entities that project essentialist notions of race, ethnicity or gender but as materiality that is in flux, subject to change. This has encouraged literary critics to trace the complex gender and racial politics of Dacre's novel (Craciun 1997; Malchow 1996; Miles 2001) but we might also read the text as including a symbolic logic that moves the individual bodies of Victoria and Zofloya into the collective imaginary of the body politic. That is, the transformative body engenders anxieties about the stability of communal bodies, such as the nation, country or other imagined communities. From this perspective, the mutability of Victoria's and Zofloya's bodies stand in for the mutability of a body politic that is subject to change due to immigration, miscegenation, cross-cultural contact or even revolution. The borders that form the boundaries of the nation are thus seen to be permeable, and, as the milk-white skin of Victoria becomes increasingly darker, her body protects social and cultural fears of infiltration and the potential corruption of a pure conception of race, ethnicity or nationality. The body of the Other cannot be held at bay. It threatens to penetrate the borders separating Black from White, African from European and, for early nineteenth-century readers in England, the transformative body warns against the potential corruption of British nationhood.

The Other represents the incursion of authoritarian values that are not seen to be proper English values in this period. The threat of tyranny was therefore articulated through discourses of difference linked to religion, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality. From this perspective, the foreign is not only contrasted with the familiar but it presses against its borders to force a sense of national unity and coherence in the face of potential invasion. Works by Walpole, Godwin, Lewis, Radcliffe, Beckford and Dacre set up a series of tensions (and sometimes dualisms) that imagine a clear-cut sense of nationhood alongside a world of difference. But the Other is not only "out there"; it is also "in here." Thus, potential fragmentation within the nation must be combatted by exiling or punishing usurpers, past and present, foreign and familiar, who challenge an imaged progressive political and cultural formation that can only exist within the ideal of an unblemished nation-state. Within the performative paradigm of this rhetoric, the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century English nation becomes, as Homi Bhabha suggests, "a liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous

histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference” (Bhabha 1994: 148). The Gothic novel often participates in this work. It depicts the barbaric or colonized Other as a way of constructing a civilized and progressive sense of selfhood. Yet the binaristic logic of such textual strategies is always doomed to failure. For just as no Gothic narrative can project only one meaning, so the narrative of the nation is always fragmented and disjointed: a situation that is exposed in the very act of attempting to impose unity through the cobbled-together form (the various bits of text, subtext, paratext and various narrative structures) of the Gothic novel.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983, London: Verso.
- Baycroft, T. (1998) *Nationalism in Europe, 1789–1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beckford, W. (2008) *Vathek*, 1786, ed. R. Lonsdale, Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics.
- Bhabha, H. (1990) *Nation and Narration*, New York: Routledge.
- (1994) *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Botting, F. (1996) *Gothic*, New York: Routledge.
- Craciun, A. (1997) “Introduction,” in A. Craciun (ed.), *Zofloya; Or, the Moor*, by C. Dacre. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 9–32.
- Dacre, C. (1997) *Zofloya; or, The Moor*, 1806, ed. A. Craciun, Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Godwin, W. (1987) *Caleb Williams*, 1794, ed. M. Hindle, London: Penguin.
- Hindle, M. (1987) “Introduction” in M. Hindle (ed.) *Caleb Williams*, 1794, London: Penguin, 9–39.
- Khair, T. (2009) *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lewis, M.G. (1992) *The Monk: A Romance*, 1796, ed. R. Geary, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Malchow, H.L. (1996) *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Miles, R. (2001) “Abjection, Nationalism and the Gothic,” in F. Botting (ed.) *The Gothic*, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 47–70.
- Ousby, I. (1974) “My Servant Caleb,” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 44.1: 42–59.
- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2004) *The Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Radcliffe, A. (1998) *The Italian*, 1797, eds. E.J. Clery and F. Garber, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, T. (1993) *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, New York: Verso.
- Schmitt, C. (1994) “Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*,” *ELH*, 61.4: 853–76.
- Tienhooven, M-J. (1997) “All Roads Lead to England: *The Monk* Constructs the Nation,” *Romanticism on the Net*, 8. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1997/v/n8/005777ar.html>> (accessed October 9, 2012).
- Walpole, H. (2002) *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, ed. F.S. Frank, Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Wein, T. (2002) *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764–1824*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

FURTHER READING

- Kandola, S. (2012) *Gothic Britain: Nation and Race, Culture and Criticism, 1707–1897*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Examining how the British nation-state came into being, this book reads a wide selection of English and Celtic texts, literature and political tracts, to track the cultural formation of the British state.)
- O'Malley, P. (2006) *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (This book argues that the Gothic genre sensationalized Catholicism and sexual difference and that, far from being fundamentally alien and threatening to British Protestant culture, the Gothic provided an imaginative space in which writers could articulate an alternative vision of British culture.)
- Parrinder, P. (2006) *Nation and the Novel: The English Novel from its Origins to the Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (A literary history of the English novel and the development of nationhood; it offers readings of how Gothic texts include distinctive, sometimes paradoxical, ideas about national identity.)
- Schmitt, C. (1997) *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (Examines how Gothic fictions and conventions gave shape to a sense of English nationality during the century in which British imperial power had its greatest influence.)
- Smith, R. (2002) *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688–1863*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Explores the Gothic through the medieval use of precedent in religious and legal debates during a period of major political and historical change that led to the formation of the British nation-state.)

CHAPTER SIX

GOTHIC COLONIES, 1850–1920



Roger Luckhurst

The Gothic piles on the sense of limits overrun: the present invaded by the past, life by death, human by inhuman forces, reason by dream-logic, taste and imagination by the sublime and the fanciful. Terror comes from the breach of boundaries: the vampire invited over the threshold, zombies massing at the last defense until it gives way under the pressure of undead bodies. The Gothic is insistently about spatial discomfort, whether from entrapment in dungeons or buried in a premature grave, the disorientation of labyrinths, or the annihilating sublimity of the vast openness of mountain ranges or Arctic wastes.

This topographic obsession was also from the beginning very geographically specific. The first wave of Gothic literature in the eighteenth century named itself as a northern European and Protestant hybrid of romance and novel that invoked its fearful Others by displacing melodramatic menaces backward in time and sideways in space, always over the border, always somewhere else. *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was a fake medieval manuscript set in an imaginary feudal Italy (Horace Walpole claimed to have only discovered after publication that there really was somewhere in southern Italy called Otranto). Ann Radcliffe's harried heroines meander through lawless southern France, the sublime Alps and Italy. The dark doings in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) could only be imagined in the monasteries of Catholic Spain, benighted home to the murderous superstition and tyranny of the Inquisition. It is because the Gothic broods on boundaries that many observe that much British Gothic fiction comes to be produced by those who started out on the edges of the nation, out where the center cannot hold, in the gloomy Calvinist tradition of Scotland (James Hogg, R.L. Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle), amongst the anxious Protestant ruling minority in Ireland (Maria Edgeworth, Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker and Oscar Wilde), or conjuring ancestral terrors, as Arthur Machen did, out of the borderlands between England and Wales, lands saturated in the blood of centuries of territorial struggle. For the Anglophile horror writer H.P. Lovecraft, writing in the 1920s, the Gothic continued to be a Nordic literature, a genre meant to demonstrate the racial superiority of northern European stock, although it mainly ended up in Lovecraft's hands as a monument to its manifold fears of dethronement and the loss of power.

It is a common insight to observe that during the nineteenth century the Gothic imagination was altered by its experience of the forces of urbanization, the centrifugal tug of the metropolis. The settings of Gothic fictions shifted from the wild landscapes or depopulated ruins of old Europe to erupt in the heart of the modern city. From the 1840s, hauntings took place on railway lines, spirits hovered around new-fangled telegraph wires and ancestral things survived and flourished in the basements of suburban houses or terraces in overlooked culs-de-sac. Ancestral horrors coil inside the shiniest modernity. This trajectory from periphery to core is essentially the plot of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which takes the Count from the "whirlpool" of races at the frayed edges of western Europe in the Balkans, where Christian civilization contests borders with the Islamic East, and transports him to England, first to Yorkshire, then to the marshy margins of London and the ruins of Carfax Abbey and finally to his purchase of a modern townhouse on Piccadilly, the very shortest walk from Buckingham Palace and the symbolic heart of the British Empire. In an influential turn of phrase, Stephen Arata has suggested that *Dracula* is an exemplary text of "reverse colonization," in which the Gothic imagination carries with the negative, inverting the dominant political discourse of late-Victorian empire at the height of its expansion, to explore the anxiety that the imperial center is rotting at the core, contaminated by impurities that international contact inevitably brings. Count Dracula is defeated by an alliance of Anglo-American-Dutch Nordics, with only the occasional fit of unmanly hysteria to mar their restoration of proper order. The vampiric pollution is chased out of London, pursued back through the dark night of Europe to its Balkan limits again, and there pitilessly dispatched.

The spatial imagination of the Gothic is rarely abstract, then, but very precisely geopolitical. As Robert Mighall has argued, "The Gothic novel's topographical sources were often conditioned by a culturally determined historical awareness" (Mighall 1999: 20). This is something that we need to keep tracking in the Gothic's circuitous development. And if it is a literature that harps on the anxious permeability of borders of nations, races and identities, then it must also always be bound up with the questions of transnational interaction and empire. This literature, named after those barbarian tribes that swooped from the steppes and finished off the Roman Empire to plunge Europe into the Dark Ages, has always been a *colonial* Gothic. The first wave of the Gothic is coincident with Britain's eighteenth-century expansion, and some of the most memorable works were written by anxious sons of fathers who had made fortunes in colonial slave plantations. Matthew "the Monk" Lewis, author of *Journal of a West-India Proprietor* (1834), died returning from inspecting the family plantation in Jamaica in 1818, where he had hoped to ameliorate the conditions of his African workers.

It is in the late-Victorian Gothic revival, though, that the link between empire and the literature of unease and terror becomes insistent and explicit. The military occupation of Egypt by the British Army in 1882 was followed by the publication of John Seeley's *The Expansion of England*. This book became the ideological Bible of a newly energetic "forward" policy of imperial expansion to create a Greater Britain. By 1900, the British had annexed 39 new territories. The "British World" was held together by the racial ideology of white imperial federation, a telegraph system that encircled the globe and a Royal Navy and civilian network of steamships stocked by strategic coaling stations across the seven seas. The vastly wealthy imperialist Cecil

Rhodes, architect of many dubious territorial land-grabs in South Africa, and who carved out the territory of Rhodesia in his own name (now Zimbabwe), notoriously mused: “I would annexe the planets if I could; I often think of that. It makes me sad to see them so clear and yet so far” (Millin 1933: 138).

Yet this era of jingoism was also one of anxiety, a knowledge that decades of almost uncontested British power in many geopolitical arenas were now challenged politically and economically by the rise of America and Germany. Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89) haunted the British imagination, since it sketched an inevitable trajectory of all empires from pomp to decadence and decline. Later, the pessimistic philosopher and historian Oswald Spengler would declare empire as the major symptom of the beginnings of the collapse of a civilization in *The Decline of the West* (1918). The British Army suffered a series of humiliating defeats in colonial territories – by Zulu warriors in 1879, Arab and North African forces in Khartoum in 1885 and by Boer irregulars using guerrilla tactics in South Africa in 1899 – prompting national debates about the physical and mental “degeneration” of British stock. Was the height of British power also the top of the parabola? Was the only way down?

The colonial Gothic was a strand of popular fiction that exploded in the expansion of mass publishing in the late nineteenth century. It generated its frisson from tarrying with the anxieties coiled around the fervent expansion of England. What Patrick Brantlinger calls the “Imperial Gothic” focused, he argues, on three themes: the fear of “going native” in the colonies; fears of what might return to the metropole from the periphery; and a different, gently melancholic sense that the only wondrous adventures left to be had were in the unmapped spaces at the limits of empire. We can use Brantlinger’s categories to begin a taxonomy of the varieties of the colonial Gothic, although we will shortly need to invent some more.

First, then, moving outward, was the fear of robust Englishmen (rarely women) losing their physical and mental identity and moral integrity as they ventured to the frontier: the terror of “going native.” In the early phases, it was the vast alien wilderness of new worlds that induced panic and anxiety. Lovecraft spoke about the early Puritan settlers in America amidst “strange and forbidding nature”: “The vast and gloomy forests in whose perpetual twilight all terrors might well lurk; the hordes of coppery Indians whose strange, saturnine visages and violent customs hinted strongly at traces of infernal origin” (Lovecraft 1973: 60). The vastness of landscapes was often experienced as a physical and psychological threat of annihilation to white settlers, to the extent that critics consider such Gothic tropes as integral to the national literatures of colonies like Canada and Australia. In Canada, Gerry Turcotte suggests, the Gothic is “in part a by-product of colonization” (Turcotte 2009: 17), and early novels like John Richardson’s *Wacousta* (1832) engulfed British troops in an illimitable and hostile environment. “The spell of these terrible solitudes,” someone says in Algernon Blackwood’s brilliant horror tale of the Canadian wilderness, “The Wendigo,” “cannot leave any mind untouched, any mind, that is, possessed of the higher imaginative qualities” (Blackwood 1973: 191). The paranoid psychology of small settlements hunched against the outer dark was integral to Northrop Frye’s famous generalization about the “garrison mentality” which, he claimed, structured post-settlement Canadian life. The Canadian wilderness was not in one place – out West, up country – but everywhere and nowhere, leaving “small

and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological ‘frontier’” (Frye 1995: 222). This psychology is still claimed to persist in Canadian literature: in the much anthologized poem “Bushed” (1951) by Earle Birney, or in Margaret Atwood’s insistence from *Survival* (1972) to *Negotiating with the Dead* (2002) that Canadian literature is shot through with Gothic sensibilities. In Australia, the infinite mysteries of the interior presented their own terrors to early settlers, where spooky events occur on bush trails or explorers stagger out of the wilderness in wide-eyed terror, as in Rosa Praed’s “The Bunyip” (1891) or Guy Boothby’s “With Three Phantoms” (1897). It is a place of odd and enigmatic vanishings, as in the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (dir. Peter Weir, 1976). Lovecraft set one of his last tales, “The Shadow Out of Time” (1936), in the Australian outback, weaving his tale of a monstrous, prehistoric intrusion between the narratives of real-life explorers of the Australian interior at the beginning of the twentieth century. Australia is rendered uncanny, as Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs have it, by the very act of colonization itself. The uncanny, the shivering sense that the familiar houses the strange and is consequently always unhoused by it, “can remind us that a condition of unsettledness folds into this taken-for-granted mode of [colonial] occupation” (Gelder and Jacobs 1998: 24).

After longer periods of settlement and engagement with indigenous cultures, the fear of enervation or corruption came not from alienation but from too familiar a contact with the natives, contact which risked vertiginous moral relativism. This is the queasy anxiety of Rudyard Kipling’s early “gossip tales” from India, first published in England to much bewilderment in the late 1880s, since they ventured into the unspoken terrain of taboo subjects, including the growing population of mixed-race children, those literally “beyond the pale,” the inevitable product of prolonged colonial contact. These stories regularly use the supernatural as a kind of currency to explore contacts between colonizer and the colonized. Enervation and corruption is what R.L. Stevenson explores in his late novel, *The Ebb Tide* (1894), or Joseph Conrad in “An Outpost of Progress” in his *Tales of Unease* (1898). The fear of “going native” amongst the savages was also, to put it very reductively, the plot of Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* (1899), although what contributes to the descent of the enigmatic Kurtz into his unspeakable acts far beyond the last colonial outposts on the Congo River is as much the violence implicit in European colonial ideology as the African “darkness” into which he has descended. “All of Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (Conrad 1983: 86), the narrator says of a man who writes idealistic tracts on the civilizing mission but also scrawls “Exterminate the brutes!” (Conrad 1983: 87) across the text in unsteady pen, forever doubled and divided from himself.

Second, and moving in the reverse direction, was the fear of invasion or contamination as contact with the “savage” world built networks along which exotic dangers could travel insidiously from the colonies back to the imperial metropolis. It was not only Count Dracula who took this reverse journey. This fear tinged much late-Victorian Gothic fiction. The defense of London and the shires in Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories is often about identifying and neutralizing the threat of exotic others. At the culmination of *The Sign of Four* (1890), for instance, Holmes and Watson chase a boat down the Thames, away from London, eventually gunning down the “savage, distorted creature,” an “unhallowed dwarf with his hideous

face,” who is an imported agent of murder, a savage pygmy firing poison darts (Conan Doyle 1982: 101–2). In “The Speckled Band” (1892), the degenerate aristocrat Dr Roylott returns from India with a poisonous snake as his dastardly means to secure illegitimate inheritance. Holmes turns the snake on his master, once again exterminating the colonial threat. In the many stories of cursed Egyptian mummies and objects that appeared in the wake of the British occupation, these narratives carry the knowledge that beautiful objects and sacred remains remain freighted with the colonial violence of their dispossession that their reification in museums or private collections cannot hide (see Luckhurst 2012). In Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* (1897), an ancient nameless thing, an indeterminate animal-human creature, travels from Cairo to London to wreak mesmeric havoc and attack the leading politician of the age, all the result of a guilty dissolute sexual secret from the harems of Egypt. The beetle slumbers in a desolate suburban house on the outskirts of London, an empty development that only redoubles the beast’s marginality. In one of the most exorbitant of these tales, the Australian writer Guy Boothby’s *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), a revived ancient magician brings down a plague on London in terrible revenge, leaving the city a necropolis that reverses Biblical punishment and echoes Egypt’s own dusty and abandoned cities of the dead. In this trope of the “marauding, invasive Other,” Stephen Arata suggests, “British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous forms” (Arata 1990: 623).

A third theme suggests that the Imperial Gothic is not just interested in evoking horror, but also uses exotic settings to transmit weird thrills and wonders too. These romance revival books acted as a kind of counterweight to increasingly ordered and disenchanted experience of the modern West, the critic Andrew Lang argued in his championing of such adventure fiction (see Lang 1886). Marlow’s complaint, as the narrator of *The Heart of Darkness*, is that the alluring white spaces on the map are vanishing: “At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there” (Conrad 1983: 33). It is the naive romance of undiscovered worlds in an otherwise quantified modernity that sends him up the Congo River after Kurtz.

The best-selling author of Gothic-tinged colonial adventure romances was Henry Rider Haggard, who as a young man, considered a dunce and unworthy of education by his father, had been sent to Natal in southern Africa to work on the staff of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Henry Bulwer. Working at the cutting edge of empire, and often venturing into tribal territories to negotiate with chieftains, Haggard imbibed much local folklore and stories of vanished kingdoms and cultures from those with whom he travelled, but he also ended up being amongst the group that raised the British flag and annexed the Transvaal in 1876. The politics of such annexations would precipitate several catastrophic wars in southern Africa, including the brutal destruction of the Zulu nation in 1879, the Matabele war in 1893, and the South African War between Boer and British settlers that began so disastrously for British troops in 1899, before the British Army corralled their enemies in concentration camps. In 1885, after a false start as a turgid realist novelist, Haggard published *King Solomon’s Mines*, which became a publishing sensation. Haggard’s formula adventures, most written in six weeks in a single draft with little editing, took simple, honest Englishmen rendered dull and uncomfortable by English life beyond the

borders of the known empire and into virile contact with bizarre lost civilizations. In *She*, serialized in 1886, and Haggard's greatest success, the odd-couple of English adventurers negotiate a series of apparently impenetrable physical borders in Africa to discover a lost culture, ruled over by an undying white matriarch, Ayesha, She-Who-Must-Be-Obedied. She is an alluring, noble creature, a white queen of a black nation that has deified her, but she is eventually revealed to have designs on replacing Queen Victoria as head of an empire with global reach. These odd fantasies of recovery, partly compensating for the destruction of the Zulu civilization that Haggard found deeply conflicting and traumatic, were always tinged by the Gothic. Everywhere in Haggard, the undead mass in underground catacombs or mountain caverns, pressing in on the living, a literal embodiment of tradition that is at a tipping point of beginning to suffocate the living. Ayesha's race persists, embalmed in uncannily life-like preservation, in hidden catacombs. King Solomon's Mines preserve the kingly line in bodies forever entombed in stalactites. Haggard was fascinated by Ancient Egypt (latterly believing himself to be a reincarnation of an Egyptian), even briefly keeping a mummy in his London study before it was said to have done something uncanny and then sent to a museum.

Haggard's impressive imitator, Bertram Mitford, another wayward son sent to the southern African colonies to make a life for himself (see Monsman 2010), sends his heroes into the African bush, variously to encounter an unnamable thing haunting the last settler outpost in *The Weird of Deadly Hollow* (1891) or to wrestle with giant tarantulas paid tribute by human sacrifice in *The Sign of the Spider* (1896), to list but two of his 40 novels set in South Africa. The thrills of the colonial adventure are never far from turning into this kind of abject, skin-crawling horror. This was their rush, and why they sold in their millions.

Ultimately, Patrick Brantlinger suggests that there is a simple equivalence between the imperial adventure and the lure of the supernatural and occult in the Gothic. They reinforce each other because both are "childish and subrational" (Brantlinger 1988: 251). This blanket judgment is rather patronizing and reductive, though, unwilling to think through the complex and varied cultural work about empire that Gothic supernaturalism could undertake. Victorian ethnographers like Edward Tylor regarded all superstitions as "survivals" of savage thinking that needed to be stamped out, all the while expressing bewilderment at the continuing rise of belief in spiritualism, psychical research and other occult beliefs at the center of the empire. Rather than repeat Tylor's mistake, we might follow psychologists who suggest that these kinds of "magical thinking" are adaptive modes of attempting to understand complex relationships and hidden causations, however speculatively (see Nemeroff and Rozin 2000). And what better way is there of modeling the effects of the emergence of a global empire? New histories of empire rely less on static models of core and periphery, center and margin, and instead suggest we "think of the empire as a series of interlocking networks or webs" or "an interconnected zone constituted by multiple points of contact and complex circuits of exchange" (Magee and Thompson 2010: 13, 16). I think we need to add another category to the colonial Gothic, then, one which understands that generic elements of supernatural fiction can be used to articulate very dynamically the genuine oddness of local colonial encounters.

In Rudyard Kipling's short story, "The Mark of the Beast," an ignorant Englishman called Fleete, recently arrived in India, contemptuously stubs out his cigar on the

sacred statue of the Hindu monkey god Hanuman. Almost immediately, he is struck down by an illness that looks like hydrophobia (rabies) and which sends Fleete into an agonizing descent into a bestial state, a regression down the evolutionary ladder. The local policeman Strickland (the colonial spy and agent of control in far-flung regions where the British rule of law runs thinly) grasps that only acceptance of local belief will save Fleete. The caretaker of the temple, the leprous Silver Man, has bewitched the Englishman for his sacrilegious transgression: Strickland and the narrator torture the native through the night until he reverses the curse. Order is restored, but at a terrible psychological cost. Not only have they lost a fair bit of their own humanity, the men have also had to accept the logic of native superstition: that curses *work*. No wonder the normally robust Strickland “went into an amazing fit of hysterics. Then it struck me that we had fought for Fleete’s soul with the Silver Man in that room, and had disgraced ourselves as Englishmen for ever, and I laughed and gasped and gurgled just as shamefully as Strickland” (Kipling 2005: 95).

In a more light-hearted vein, Haggard’s adventurers in *King Solomon’s Mines* escape a sticky situation by using western scientific knowledge to exploit native belief. They act like gods to appear to call down an eclipse of the sun, using nonsense invocations and mixing up the King James Bible, the Ingoldsby Legends and fragments of “the most classical bad language” (Haggard 1989: 185), in a comical hybrid; the natives are awestruck by their apparent supernatural powers when the sun darkens overhead. In one way, this is a blunt racist dramatization of the triumph of superior western science over inferior savage belief. At the same time, though, the westerners have had to enter the “savage mind” to grasp the psychology of superstition, and act in an unhinged way to produce a *hybrid* knowledge that works only in the very act of encounter. Precisely because of this engagement, they will not be able to sustain the stance of distance, superiority and control over the Africans for long.

The encounter in the field, at the very limit of the frontier, is a space of what Mary Louise Pratt has called a “contact zone,” a space “where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other,” not just physically but also discursively (Pratt 1992: 4). It is the contact that actively produces the subjectivity of *both* the “native” and the “observer.” It is not, or never only, an occasion when colonizers dominate, contain and define the colonized, since it also contains the possibility of transculturation, communication that produces a hybrid, interstitial knowledge. As Edward Said observed: “All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic” (Said 1994: xxix). Supernatural interpretations get amplified in the contact zone, I would argue, because they provide a frame of explanation on both sides of the encounter: they provide a currency for transcultural exchange.

In Rosa Campbell Praed’s tale “The Bunyip” (1891), for example, the narrator observes that for white settlers in Australia, the old-world superstitions of vampires, fauns and spooks have been left behind in a place that has no apparent history and thus no chance of being haunted: “Nature and civilisation have been very niggard here in all that makes romance” (Praed 2007: 117). To tease themselves at campfires on the trail, the travellers adopt “the one respectable flesh-curdling horror of which Australia can boast” (Praed 2007: 117): the aboriginal belief in the Bunyip, a chimeric, blanched creature, often described in different physical forms, that haunts lagoons with terrible cries. In a common rhetorical strategy, the articulation of the

belief is given over to the “black fellows” as a measure of their savage credulity. Just as commonly, the trajectory of the tale is to give the settlers a horrifying glimpse of the possibility that the Bunyip might, after all, exist. This is the moment where the supernatural transculturates frontier experience. There are shocking cries that rise from a nearby lagoon, a “dreary, uncanny place” (123): the “white prostrate form” (124) they recover is in fact the body of a young white girl from the nearby settlement, Coffin Lid. Were the screams her death cries, or the sound of the Bunyip? Over the body of the settler child, the Whites look down on the deathly mirror of their own act of colonization, re-routed through local belief.

The Colonial Gothic provides generic tools to translate unprecedented frontier experience into an evolving popular form. The supernatural offers a latitude, a capaciousness, to entertain beliefs that the enlightened missionaries of empire aimed to stamp out. These stories exploit the hesitancy of the fictive frame to allow the temporary assertion of magical thinking as a way of managing the oddness of colonial existence at the edges where metropolitan authority runs out. It was at this point, the historian of empire C.A. Bayly argues, between political and military intelligence and indigenous knowledge, that “colonial rule was at its most vulnerable” (Bayly 1996: 2). But the Gothic form also provides a sly commentary on the deathly logic of colonial violence. Hauntings on dispossessed land or vengeful stolen artifacts in museums provide, in the colonial context, a place where the anxiety about expropriation and transgression can be voiced alongside or underneath the official discourse of colonialism’s economic and cultural virtues. What these tales return to the metropolis is a measure of the unease of this project, even in its most expansive and ideologically strident phases.

We are supposed to have passed through the era of decolonization, the formal dismantlement of colonial empires. The British Empire began to break up in the course of WWII, and this was accelerated by demands to open up its dominions and protectorates to global trade in the terms set by the Americans for Britain to repay their war debt: the moment when the British ceased to be an independent global power. However, the political and legal independence granted to former colonies since 1945 has never quite ended continuing forms of economic dependency and international control. The age of empire was succeeded by proxy Cold War blocs and then by a form of neo-liberal globalization “composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule” that has been named “Empire” in an influential polemic by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Hardt and Negri 2000: xii).

Post-colonial literature is not something that comes after colonialism has vanished, then. “One remains within the structure of colonialism, even as one is somehow located beyond them or ‘after’ them” (Gelder and Jacobs 1998: 24). In this sense, much post-colonial literature can be figured through tropes of haunting or the uncanny. Post-colonial settler nations, across the United States, Canada, Australasia, South Africa and South America, pass through phases of erasure, denial, disavowal and even more or less effective forms of reconciliation with the traumatic facts of the genocidal logic of settlement on indigenous populations. Yet such violent history is not something easily resolved and brought to closure, and nor should it be. To this task of impossible mourning, many recent critics have argued that the task of art and criticism is to bear witness. As Homi Bhabha puts it in his reading of Toni Morrison’s

ghost story about the atrocious legacies of slavery, *Beloved* (1988), it is to be a witness “to the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present” (Bhabha 1992: 147). The post-colonial world, one might say, is structurally haunted by the specters of the colonial past. But to avoid over-generalization, it is always best to locate these ghosts in their specific sites.

This perhaps explains the continuing popularity of Gothic forms into the post-colonial age. This fiction is no longer about the primal horrors of first encounter, but the supplemental horrors that come with violent acts of domination and expropriation. What haunts is a colonial past that most modern, independent, post-colonial states would prefer to forget or declare reconciled.

The agony of post-colonial literature is that it can provide the possibility for subjugated peoples to articulate their losses and their grief, but often only in the forms and language of the very forces that oppressed them. This again suggests why the Gothic form is a popular mode in this context: it is a lowly, hybrid, bastard genre whose dream-like logic allows for sudden reversals or subversions of normal distributions of power. There have been several notable post-colonial rewritings of Gothic tropes. Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* uses the haunted house to evoke an impossible ghost that howls inconsolably for the “60 million and more” lost in the system of slavery. The Australian writer Mudrooroo (whose aboriginal ancestry has been the subject of controversy) wrote several books, beginning with *The Undying* (1998), in which European vampire mythology is transposed to figure the arrival of white settlers and the plague they spread, precisely inverting the *Dracula* myth of foreign invasion. The Cree writer Tomson Highway’s *The Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998), a book about the forced re-education and sexual abuse of Cree children by Catholic missionaries in Canada in the 1950s, uses aspects of the native wendigo legend to grasp the horrors of that abuse. In doing so, it takes back the wendigo myth, first exploited in Gothic fiction by Algernon Blackwood in 1910 and constantly reused in North American Gothic fiction ever since, returning the myth to its origins. Highway is able to use the flexibility of the novel form and the reversibility of Gothic tropes to convey a wholly different, indigenous sense of how the natural and the supernatural are interwoven outside the separations of western theological and Enlightenment thought.

The colonial Gothic is a very specific, historically bounded genre, then. But because the violent legacies of colonialism cannot be resolved, the genre continues to be a vital strand in the continuing globalization of the Gothic mode, providing tropes by which economic, cultural and biopolitical pressures on identity can be turned into compelling narratives.

REFERENCES

- Arata, S. (1990) “The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation,” *Victorian Studies*, 33.4: 621–45.
Bayly, C.A. (1996) *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780–1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bhabha, H. (1992) “The World and the Home,” *Social Text*, 10.2–3: 141–53.
Blackwood, A. (1973) “The Wendigo,” in *Best Ghost Stories of Algernon Blackwood*, New York: Dover, 95–123.

- Brantlinger, P. (1988) *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830–1914*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Conan Doyle, A. (1982) *The Sign of Four*, London: Penguin.
- Conrad, J. (1983) *Heart of Darkness*, 1899, ed. P. O’Prey, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Frye, N. (1995) *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*, Concord, Ontario: Anansi.
- Gelder, K. and Jacobs, J. (1998) *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Haggard, H.R. (1989) *King Solomon’s Mines*, 1885, ed. D. Butts, Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Highway, T. (2008) *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*, 1998, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Kipling, R. (2005) “The Mark of the Beast,” in R. Luckhurst (ed.) *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*, Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 84–95.
- Lang, A. (1886) “Realism and Romance,” *Contemporary Review*, 52: 683–93.
- Lovcraft, H. P. (1973) *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, 1913, New York: Dover.
- Luckhurst, R. (2012) *The Mummy’s Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Magee, G.B. and Thompson, A.S. (2010) *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mighall, R. (1999) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History’s Nightmares*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Millin, S.G. (1933) *Rhodes*, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Monsman, G. (2010) *Colonial Voices: The Anglo-African Romance of Empire*, New Orleans: University Press of the South.
- Mudrooroo (1998) *The Undying*, Pymble, New South Wales: Angus and Robertson.
- Nemeroff, C. and Rozin, P. (2000) “The Makings of the Magical Mind: The Nature and Function of Sympathetic Magical Thinking,” in K. Rosengren *et al.* (eds) *Imagining the Impossible: Magical, Scientific, and Religious Thinking in Children*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–34.
- Praed, R.C. (2007) “The Bunyip,” in K. Gelder and R. Weaver (eds), *The Anthology of Colonial Australian Gothic Fiction*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 117–25.
- Pratt, M.L. (1992) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge.
- Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage.
- Turcotte, G. (2009) *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction*, Brussels: Peter Lang.

FURTHER READING

- Groom, N. (2012) *The Gothic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Very useful short introduction to the meaning of “Gothic” from Dark Ages to the present.)
- Harlow, B. and Carter, M. (1999) *Imperialism and Orientalism: A Documentary Sourcebook*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. (Strong collection of primary materials from the period, excellent for contextualizing literary readings.)
- McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, London: Routledge. (Wide-ranging, theoretically-informed study of Victorian colonial literature.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

HISTORY, TRAUMA AND THE GOTHIC IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN FICTIONS



Jerrold E. Hogle

THE GROUNDING OF GOTHIC IN TRAUMA

When Patrick McGrath, a present-day novelist known for re-working older Gothic conventions, has his psychiatrist-narrator in *Trauma* define that word as “a shock to the mind so intense that you can’t get rid of it” before a 1980s New York backdrop where the “twin towers” loom as “cliffs of blackness,” like Gothic ruins (McGrath 2008: 23, 90), he reminds us that Gothic fiction has always begun with trauma – usually multiple kinds of trauma at the outset and in retrospect. Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the first text subtitled *A Gothic Story* in its 1765 edition, starts with the crushing of Prince Manfred’s son by a huge dark helmet that resembles part of an effigy on the underground tomb of Alfonso, the castle’s original owner (Walpole 1996: 19–21). This breaking of a body by a monster-sized ghost already broken into fragments itself, an act which recalls the origin of “trauma” in the ancient Greek word for “wound,” even turns out to be rooted in the long-suppressed murder of Alfonso by Manfred’s grandfather, a “shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed” (the psychological meaning of *trauma* in the *OED*) deep within the psyche of Manfred and his fictionalized culture. In addition, as we now know from studying Walpole’s milieu, these imaginary traumas are rooted themselves in a “crisis in the experience of [his] eighteenth-century audience” as it felt the ideological construction of the basis for self-definition increasingly torn “between the traditional claims of landed property” symbolized by Walpole’s preternatural specters and “the new claims of the private family” transplanted into his tale from the middle-class “realism” of Defoe, Richardson and Smollett (Clery 1995: 77–79). Gothic fiction-making has always been divided within itself, just as Walpole says in his 1765 Preface by announcing the “Gothic Story” as a “blend of the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern” (Walpole 1996: 9), and this forcing-together of conflicting forms was then and remains symptomatic of deeply traumatic social, ideological and broadly psychological conflicts among different ways of seeing the world and the self. The fictionalized exaggerations of physical and psychic woundings and hauntings in the Gothic’s mixture of styles both intimates *and* holds at a distance levels of shock that are far more pervasive and

complex than the fictive forms in which they are rendered as half-graphically real and half-anachronistically fanciful. All of this is especially fitting for trauma because its cutting into the norms of daily perception leads to “a collapse of witnessing,” as Cathy Caruth has shown, and any “making sense” of it *must* be anachronistic, done from the distance of a “temporal delay,” that combines a “repeated suffering of the event” with a displacement of it, a “continual leaving of its site” (Caruth 1995: 10).

By enacting this conundrum, moreover, the Walpolean Gothic extends the fear-based “sublime” as Edmund Burke defines it in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). There, sublime constructions arouse terror in those who contemplate aesthetic renderings of craggy landscapes and enormous ruins, especially when their “obscurity” is intensified by remembered “notions of ghosts and goblins” (Burke 1990: 54). That is because all of these more deeply intimate the “danger or pain” of the subject’s annihilation, the ultimate trauma, even as they keep that violence artistically “at certain distances” (Burke 1990: 36). Painful associations of ideas aroused by dark and looming figures, all of which are associated for Burke with “some modification of power” threatening the subject, are thus counterbalanced by the “pleasure” of the psyche being insulated by artifice from actual harm (Burke 1990: 59). This “terrific sublime” has consequently led to Slavoj Žižek’s more recent take on the nature of fictionality, of which the Gothic constitutes a revealing “hyper” form. For him it is an exaggerated and ideological suggesting-and-obscuring, in literature, films and online games, of what Jacques Lacan has called the annihilating “Real” beyond all representation. In Žižek’s view, this “Real” is the traumatic welter of “social antagonism” engulfing us all, as well as the amorphous chaos of sheer physicality that threatens all boundaries projected onto it by human systems, so the Gothic can sublimate that only by converting it into a Burkean “erasure” of its “background noise,” a distancing of the darkness we obscurely sense and thus of the trauma that nonetheless “provides the density of [that erasure’s] actual meaning” (Žižek 2011: 5–6). With the most traumatic levels of the Real being feared as unrepresentable, the only way they can be suggested, yet still kept sufficiently “Other,” is in a synecdochic stand-in for their horror that suggests them just enough in a blatant fiction to intimate how awful they are without audiences directly facing them to the point of real trauma.

The Gothic, then, is inherently about deep-seated and large-scale, even national and international, traumas that are intimated and yet masked behind hyperbolic symbols of them. All of these, too, are enveloped in the Gothic by conflicted conventions that are simultaneously threatening to, and protective of, the audience, oscillating between the horrifically “realistic” that is too immediate and the imaginatively “marvelous” that is safer because it is unbelievable in post-Enlightenment thought. Such, I would argue, is the case, especially in moments of cultural upheaval, in all the major Gothic fictions across the last two-and-a-half centuries. Consider, for examples, how the 1790s debates around and within the French Revolution are suggested by displacement in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Monk* (1796), or the ways in which the shocks to standard world-views posed by theories of evolution/devolution, the newly-articulated unconscious and unsettling fluidities in gender and sexual orientations are transmogrified over the 1890s in Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) and James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898). The twentieth century

has therefore seen the proliferation of the Gothic into its greatest number of different forms because world-changing wars, pandemics, holocausts and the ideological conflicts underlying them so thoroughly shell-shocked western psyches and bodies, from 1900 through the 1950s, that they reappear, albeit “through a glass darkly,” in Gothic writings ranging from H.P. Lovecraft’s to Elizabeth Bowen’s (see Wasson 2010) and in films, from Robert Weine’s *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* from Germany (1920), redolent of WWI, to the many 1930s–1940s reboots of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Wolf-Man*, that indirectly allude to, yet keep audiences diverted from, WWII, including the social antagonisms it intensified on the home front that reappear just as Gothicized in fictions of this era.

THE MODERN GOTHIC DILEMMA

It may be in the later twentieth and at the beginnings of the twenty-first century, however, that we find the most explosive variations on Gothic recastings of trauma. The Civil Rights movements of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Europe and America returned attention to the lingering wounds of slavery and legalized discrimination in both “minority” populations and women of all races. They consequently gave rise, on one hand, to an effulgence of African-American Gothic novels rendering, yet still only symbolizing, the trauma of being black in an Anglo-dominated world (Wester 2012: 148–257) and, on the other, to a return from repression of a strong feminist strain of Gothic, starting with Shirley Jackson’s *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) – and still active in such films as Pascal Laugier’s *Martyrs* (2008) and Sean Durkin’s *Martha Marcy May Marlene* (2011) – that both highlights the many cultural woundings of women by men, families and whole cultures, sometimes including brutal suppressions of same-sex love, and suggests alternative paths to self-realization, traumatic at first and mostly still fictional, that may release violated women into a “neo-gothic excess” that is either a “liberating disruption” from or a threatening relapse back into patriarchal “order and control” (Becker 1999: 138). This questioning of sex roles and orientations, not surprisingly, has also become linked to rising western anxieties about the private relation of mothers *and* fathers to their children. Given the ideological reassertion of the “nuclear family” in the West after WWII and the increasing acceptance of Freud’s sense of primal Oedipal tensions, we have come to fear that the members of the crucible of conflict that is the family can traumatize each other, as in Mervyn LeRoy’s Gothic film *The Bad Seed* (1956), and leave lingering effects that become publically traumatic outbursts in early youth, adolescence or later stages of development.

This fear of primal-but-long-hidden childhood abuse has consequently been refigured/distorted into four main tracks in its recent Gothic manifestations: the suggestion of an extreme maternal dominance that may haunt both children and their abusers, from Robert Bloch’s *Psycho* (1959) and the Hitchcock film of it (1960) to Alejandro Amenábar’s transformation of *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Others* (a 2001 haunted-house film that displaces real murders of children by their mothers and the controversies over their causes in the 1990s); the rooting of teenage or adult violence in more original child abuse *not* just by the mother, but by the father and the culture, the driving force in Graham Joyce’s novel *The Tooth Fairy* (1996) and recent Gothic films such as Anthony DiBlasi’s *Dread* (2009) or Nick Murphy’s *The Awakening*

(2011); the continuation of the *Bad Seed* fear that children may come into life, prior to nurture, as *inherently* traumatized (“possessed” by pre-sexual, power-hungry and death-oriented drives, as Freud has suggested) and thus as traumatizers of others as though they were “little Satans,” the stuff of William Peter Blatty’s *The Exorcist* (1971; William Friedkin film 1973) and Richard Donner’s *The Omen* (1976) and their many adaptations or sequels; and the idea that childhood trauma may either prompt or release an early capacity for transcendent vision that can lead, on the one hand, to the child opening up abysmal depths of mental illness in his or her family’s or culture’s past and, on the other, to his/her exercising a quasi-supernatural power to save him/herself from violence and guilt rooted in early abuse, a frequent subject for Stephen King in novels ranging from *The Shining* in 1977 to *Lisey’s Story* in 2004 (see Bruhm 2006: 98–113 and Armitt 2011: 15–47).

The Gothicizing of all this, to be sure, exactly in the ways Caruth and Žižek would emphasize, does seem both to suggest this tangle of traumas and to relocate and thus obfuscate its causes, as when the latter are made to seem supernatural forces, grounds for imaginative transcendence, or inclinations from a past seemingly left far behind by the modern consciousness. But the late-modern Gothic also raises a dilemma about whether these kinds of fiction are really continuing the Gothic’s capacity for the half-revelation and half-concealment of cultural and individual trauma. Faced with more overtly visible traumas over the last several decades than at any time in history – televised images of war’s front lines or bodies cut open for surgery, public convictions for child abuse backed by released photographs, school shootings or public assassinations and the vast human destruction that occurred on September 11, 2001 (now abbreviated “9/11”) – how can the “Gothic sublime” not tilt its balance of tendencies toward the graphic depiction of horror and give up its fantastic heightenings that keep the Real removed from immediacy? Would not going that far make the Gothic cease to be what it is? Or can the Gothic still have the power to help us deal with larger cultural traumas when the horrific nature of their most visible symptoms must be the starting points for fictional representations? How can we answer such questions especially if we look at the Gothic since 9/11 itself – and not just at the examples I have noted dated after 2001 that intensify earlier modern traumas? I propose to begin a wider response to these queries by focusing below on a few key examples of post-9/11 Gothic (or near-Gothic) fictions that actually refer to that event. Since no one alive can duplicate the experience of dying within the exploding towers of the World Trade Center, I want to suggest how some quite recent “Gothics” use the tug-of-war between tendencies in that mode and in the paradox of representing unrepresentable trauma to reveal and aesthetically reposition, thereby artfully distancing so that we can more thoughtfully confront, the inchoate cultural and personal struggles with conflicting ideas and emotions that is our traumatic Real of “social antagonisms” just before, on and since that terrible day. We need fictions to better understand the *meaning* for us of anything we choose to represent from the world we have observed, even if that meaning turns out to be traumatic contradictions in our own minds and cultures, and I find that the best of the post-9/11 uses of Gothic in fiction achieve that purpose for attentive readers by using the conflicted un-naturalness basic to the Gothic itself to help us concurrently grasp and conceal how profoundly conflicted we are about the most immediate and pervasive cultural “woundings” of our western world as it has come to be.

PARTIAL GOTHIC: EXTREMELY LOUD AND INCREDIBLY CLOSE

Seeing as the Gothic has always been unstable in sliding between extremes of realism and extravagant romance, it is not surprising that post-9/11 uses of it vary greatly in how much each work tilts toward one or other of the Gothic's extremes. Some such fictions flagrantly adopt almost all of the older techniques of Gothic exaggeration: antiquated settings left over from a dead past, "original sins" hidden deep in that past, at least quasi-supernatural ghost-figures (such as moving statues or walking portraits) haunting characters because of those sins, suggestions that these are monsters mixing incompatible states of being (either lying behind them in the Real or projected onto them by conflicted principal characters), radically different modes of discourse (such as history and fantasy) set side by side, the suspension of action for "terrific sublime" visualizations reminiscent of painting or the theater, older stories uncovered by (and often traumatizing) the immediate one and of course risings of the unconscious in troubling sublimations. At the same time, some fictions also mix selections from these with what seems to be quotidian *reportage* or a highly empirical stream of consciousness that has long been a kind of realism for modernist writers. Yet even the different choices that current fictions make across this continuum, provided they use some Gothic features, are revealing about how the Gothic after 9/11 can *both* bring out *and* keep at bay our deepest ambivalences toward the worst of cultural traumas so that we can see just how conflicted and multi-dimensional they are as we look back on them from a frightening closeness and a comprehensible distance.

What I would call the post-9/11 "partial Gothic," for example, is epitomized for me by the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer, whose schemes suggesting trauma turn more to the Gothic than Stephen Daldry does in his 2011 film version. Building on the tradition of the gifted child traumatized into mental "overdrive," Foer's nine-year-old semi-savant, Oskar Schell, keeps frenetically re-imagining ways to come to terms with the unseen death of his father, Thomas, in the Trade Center collapse. One of these ways is the Gothic scheme in which Oskar wonders if "skyscrapers for dead people" might be "built down" so that a "whole dead world could be underneath the living one" in the manner of a Walpolean crypt enlarged enough, like the ghost of Alfonso, to house all the deceased of 9/11 in a single place and so contain them for imaginative comprehension (Foer 2005: 3). To this opening onto a Burkean vastness harboring but also burying death, Foer adds Oskar's *Otranto*-esque search for a deeply-hidden artifact, supposedly the site of the lost meaning or truth behind a death. He finds a key in an envelope labeled "Black" within a vase that Thomas, we later learn, had sequestered as a gift for Oskar's mother and searches the city to locate the repository that this key will unlock. Finding that, he imagines, might, on the one hand, allow him to come as close as he can to touching his father behind all the ghostings of him in Oskar's many memorial flashbacks and, on the other, grant him some vague absolution for what he feels to be his own "primal crime," which he delays admitting, like a Gothic hero-villain, till very near the end: that he, Oskar, was too afraid on 9/11 to pick up the phone to answer Thomas's last answering-machine message: "*Are you there? Are you there? Are you there?*" (Foer 2005: 301), the haunting questions, increasingly

distant from the body that spoke them, to which the key may help provide Oskar a grounded physical reference-point. Yet what the key unlocks turns out to be as un-Gothic as possible. It is a safe-deposit box in which “William Black,” from whom Thomas bought the vase (not knowing of the envelope) in an estate-sale of *William’s* father’s possessions, expects to find a merely quotidian leftover that holds no ultimate truth. Oskar therefore declines seeing it in favor of digging up his father’s coffin, even though that hollow signifier will still be “incredibly empty” (Foer 2005: 321), with so many 9/11 bodies never having been found at all. At such points, Foer’s novel diverts attention from Walpolean antiquarianism, now just one figment of Oskar’s “what if” imagination, and edges the reader into the chance encounters and random relationships of the current urban maze, a discourse of mundane realism scattered among multiple voices that turns the central character’s quest into wanderings through realms of somewhat linked (since there are two dead fathers), but in the end mostly disconnected, differences. One of the “antagonisms” most connected to the trauma of 9/11, then, comes dimly into view for Foer’s reader. His novel leaves us torn over whether 9/11 or any great trauma should or can be interpreted down to singular explanatory foundations, however much we desire them even as we try to keep them distant, or whether all such trauma can only be known from – and is always dissipated among – its effects spread throughout a landscape of postmodern multiplicities ultimately as fragmented as the Twin Towers came to be that day.

FULL-BLOWN GOTHIC: *GHOST TOWN*

As it happens, McGrath’s *Trauma* is even more partial in its Gothicism than *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Although its speaker-psychiatrist ultimately finds his failings rooted in a “primal crime,” his mother putting a gun to his head in a decaying hotel when he was a child (McGrath 2008: 203), *Trauma* mostly rejects “the residual trappings of the Gothic” as if it were a “conscious attempt to move away” from that mode (Zlosnik 2011: 125–26). The opposite is true, however, of McGrath’s 2005 collection of three short novellas about his adopted New York that he has called, quite aptly, *Ghost Town*. Here the Gothic is in such full cry that the *New York Times* has referred to this book as “Gothic Gotham,” seeing as its author has this time used several classic Walpolean features, as well as their intimations of the conflicted Real, to give the only “shape” possible to a “history of violence” that McGrath sees as the essence of Manhattan’s most historic moments from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century (Zlosnik 2011: 109). Even the final story, “Ground Zero,” the only one that takes place after 9/11, has *its* psychiatrist-narrator, a woman fixated on the male patient of hers (Dan Silver) who seems most “profoundly” affected by “the horror” at the “end of island” (McGrath 2005: 175–77), describe the “torn open” Towers in a terrific sublime vista as “the wreckage of a vast modern cathedral” in which the “columns” are “skewed . . . like tombstones in the nearby graveyard of Trinity Church” (McGrath 2005: 195), a reaching after an already-fragmented tradition, as in the giant helmet recalling a Catholic tomb, to achieve what every character seeks in this tale: a representation of crushing death mitigated by “relief from the hard edges of an unbearable physical reality” (McGrath 2005: 191). It is not that surprising, consequently, when the psychiatrist maternally (*à la*

Psycho) focuses her fixation with “Danny” on his passion for the Asian-American prostitute Kim Lee, who herself is fixated on the specter of Jay Minkoff, her former lover killed in one of the Towers and also the son of another Minkoff she serviced, the guilt over which Jay’s ghost now holds up to Kim Lee, at least in her mind. Such a pattern follows the one that ends *The Castle of Otranto*, where the restored true Prince (Theodore) is left longing for a spectral dead woman behind the image of the woman (Isabella) now promised to him, a corpse-bride specter (Matilda) whose own longing was always for the older ancestor (Alfonso) whose face is like Theodore’s (Walpole 1996: 115, 41). Gothic is still helping us recognize, even after 9/11, how much our desire to both rejoin and avoid the Real is configured in our longings for objects of desire that are always no more than signs for the specters of still other objects that themselves recede almost infinitely back toward other specters, all so that the Real can be intimated in them but can never finally reabsorb those of us who are still alive.

Perhaps one way to finally protect oneself from this endless regression is another deeply Gothic device employed by the “Ground Zero” psychiatrist, her climatic projection of monstrosity, to avoid her own, on Kim Lee, as though this mixed “oriental” could justify even John Ashcroft’s “suspension of due process,” his call for more racial profiling before and after 9/11 (McGrath 2005: 211–12). Yet this choice ends up suggesting how much the Real, like the 9/11 now epitomizing it too much to be faced head-on, is riddled with and interpreted through irresolvable social antagonisms. Among them, too, is another indecision over how much the interpersonal/racial hatreds that both caused 9/11 and were exacerbated by it are in fact forces of history too outside individual control to be cured or are matters of very individual choice, such as the psychiatrist’s racist suggestions prompted by her own unconscious and personal agenda. It is this combination of deep quandaries that keeps resurfacing, albeit with very different ingredients every time, as readers of *Ghost Town* look back to previous New York moments in its earlier stories, each taking place at an earlier transition also crucial to that city’s rising from foundations of trauma upon trauma. In “The Year of the Gibbet,” the first tale, for example, the narrator, Edmund, likely dying of the plague that traumatized New York in 1832, sees this horror harkening back to the occupation of the city by vampiric British troops when he was ten in 1776 and to the stripping and hanging of his mother in 1777 for carrying hidden letters between leaders of the revolution. These memories keep calling up the ghost of his mother less as the statuesque hero he wants to remember and more as a Gothic monstrosity/zombie with “empty eyes, her soiled clothing open at the seams and her teeth loose in her skull” (McGrath 2005: 62). In this Gothic form, she embodies, not just the revulsion/attraction of the Real as death itself for Edmund (in which he does hope to join her) and not just the guilt he projects onto this ghost for his not having saved her in 1777, but the entire complex Real of filthy, angry, misogynistic, disease-ridden antagonism among classes that was the American Revolution behind the now-mythologized one. As both a recollection and distancing of that Reality and hence of the rough, not complete, parallel between that time of American trauma and 9/11, this wraith also suggests a sense of history in general that reveals it to be a construction, like Edmund’s tale, built up to cover, as well as to represent, a chaos of antagonisms in which individual and wider responsibilities for trauma are impossible to distinguish, slipping dirtily into and out

of each other without any one consciousness controlling them (hence the empty eyes). Only the Gothic taken to this extreme throughout *Ghost Town* could have achieved this range of suggestion precisely because it uses the most conflicted of figurations to expose and distance western humanity's most conflicted moments, past and present.

“BETWIXT AND BETWEEN”: *FALLING MAN*

There have also been notable fictions since 9/11, however, that have employed the Gothic less constantly than McGrath yet more insistently than Foer to make *and* obscure other suggestions of this same complexity, mostly by having strongly Gothic echoes jut momentarily out of more realistic and present-day backgrounds, leaving us caught more inescapably between ideological registers than we often feel in reading older Gothic novels. A case in point is Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007), the fictive extension of his essay for *Harper's* in December 2001 that saw the “grim subtext” of 9/11 quasi-Gothically as a terrorist adoption of modern technology to make civilization “fall back in time and space” (DeLillo in Mauro 2011: 594). Most of the time this novel, quite realistically, sees the struggle of Keith and Lianne Neudecker to renew their marriage after Keith has been traumatized on 9/11 by people and debris falling around him (DeLillo 2007: 3–6) as “an analog to the collision of the planes and the collapse of the buildings,” which are reenacted and kept at a distance in lives close to them and many blocks away (Mauro 2011: 593). What is most shocking for both husband and wife, though, is the sudden and repeated appearance, at times and places far from Ground Zero, of “a performance artist known as Falling Man,” a “little theater piece” composed of a suspended “falling figure that trails a collective dread” like the descending helmet and walking portrait that “come down among us” in Walpole's *Otranto* (DeLillo 2007: 33). This figure is explicitly like the picture-in-motion, it turns out, in re-performing, while also suspending, an Associated Press photograph of an actual 9/11 victim in downward flight taken at 9:56 a.m. that day by Richard Drew, in part because that image soon became publically “taboo” in the way it too-hauntingly raised concerns over “an aesthetic object” continuing to manifest “the horrifying certainly of this man's death” and thus the Real of so many falls and deaths on 9/11 itself (Mauro 2011: 584). By using such a Gothic “terror,” but not letting it solve or ground the central couple's problems, DeLillo expands on the conundrums that the photograph raised to the point of dimly exposing and leaving suspended (hence unresolved) the conflicting questions that *Falling Man* raises, just as a powerful Gothic image should, in the wake of 9/11. Are we always to be haunted by this falling (we who have survived it) so that it remains depressingly inescapable as a basis of the “current human condition” held threateningly constant? Or do the features of the performance that remove it from the 9/11 fall, somewhat like those that distend and distance Walpole's ghosts compared to the statues and paintings they recollect, mean that we can keep the 9/11 “Real” at bay by playing out a portion of it well away from it and in a way that keeps the body alive, “suspending” the threat of death as in the Burkean sublime – even in the obituary that notes the passing of the performance artist by giving him a name, which itself simultaneously keeps the image alive and disconnects it further from 9/11 (DeLillo 2007: 218–20)?

Lianne keeps this ideological conflict hovering over us late in this novel when she juxtaposes the Drew photograph itself with accounts about the artist and decides to imagine Falling Man, unlike the photo, as “a trump card in a tarot deck” with his “name in Gothic type, the figure twisting down in a stormy night sky,” even though the performer always appeared in daylight and was never as Gothicized as she now makes him (DeLillo 2007: 221). In this way, she concludes, the quintessential 9/11 victim, even Keith, can come to seem a “falling angel” and a “beauty,” however “horrific” (222). The primal horror of horrors that began *Falling Man* is thus redeemed by becoming sheer artifice and part of an oft-discredited and antiquated fortune-telling “tarot” scheme that manifestly escapes the Real. This jutting-in of the Gothic thereby helps us to deal with the incomprehensibility of 9/11 by creating a displacement of it that is itself incomprehensible, a way of accepting and distancing the total dissolution that occurred with that trauma without either forgetting it or remembering it completely. To this Gothic element, after all, DeLillo adds another, this novel’s most controversial feature for most reviewers. He includes the kind of secret story of earlier causes that has ended Gothic tales from Walpole’s to his by inserting narrative fragments that track the actions and thoughts of Hammad from Iraq, one of the terrorists in one of the planes that hit New York (DeLillo 2007: 77–83, 171–78, 237–46), and making him an embodiment of DeLillo’s sense in *Harper’s* that the “terrorists of September 11 want to bring back the past” (DeLillo in Mauro 2011: 594), as in Hammad’s claim to be motivated by an “allegiance of the living to those who were dead and defeated” throughout Arab history (DeLillo 2007: 78). Yes, DeLillo thus risks a racist oversimplification of motives by making his terrorist, despite Hammad’s doubts, a Gothic primal destroyer. But he also complicates that tendency in a Gothic fashion that parallels Lianne’s juxtaposition of a Falling Man tarot card and the Drew photograph. The novel’s ending has Hammad’s awareness of the “aircraft” striking “the tower” slide into the “blast” that hurls “Keith Neudecker out of his chair and into a wall,” where the novel began (DeLillo 2007: 239). At this Gothic “primal crime” climax, the perspectives of Hammad and Keith are so coterminous and so hard to separate that we have to wonder about how much their motives and feelings are similar as well as different. Even if *Falling Man* uses the Gothic selectively to place retrogressive and progressive systems of belief in violent, even traumatic, contrast to each other, as Gothic fiction has often done, it also follows the Gothic penchant for allowing no side in such a collision to escape the inclinations of the other. Like the Gothic generally, then, DeLillo’s response to 9/11, really like Foer’s and McGrath’s as well, concurrently intimates and distances the horrific Real by coloring the horrors of history with fictional intensifications and, by that method, poses for us the problem of how differing ideologies keep moving into and against each other in a traumatic process that nevertheless allows us to give some shape and meaning to trauma – if only by Gothic means that misrepresent it. There have recently been and will doubtless be other symbolic contributions to this conflicted process as the Gothic keeps being re-invoked to help us face and not face 9/11, but the best ones so far have shown us what the persistence of this mode can do to help us grasp the complex of feelings with which we face trauma, even as the content of those complexes changes across the history of human civilizations and Gothic fictions.

REFERENCES

- Armitt, L. (2011) *History of the Gothic: Twentieth-Century Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Becker, S. (1999) *Gothic Forms of Feminine Fictions*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bruhm, S. (2006) "Nightmare on Sesame Street; Or, The Self-Possessed Child," *Gothic Studies*, 8.2: 98–113.
- Burke, E. (1990) *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757, ed. A. Phillips. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caruth, C. (ed.) (1995) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Clery, E.J. (1995) *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DeLillo, D. (2007) *Falling Man: a Novel*, New York: Scribner.
- Foer, J.S. (2005) *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Mauro, A. (2011) "The Languishing of the Falling Man: Don DeLillo and Jonathan Safran Foer's Photographic History of 9/11," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 57: 584–606.
- McGrath, P. (2005) *Ghost Town: Tales of Manhattan Then and Now*, New York: Bloomsbury.
- (2008) *Trauma*, New York: Knopf.
- Walpole, H. (1996) *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, eds W.S. Lewis and E.J. Clery, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wasson, S. (2010) *Urban Gothic of the Second World War: Dark London*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wester, M. (2012) *African American Gothic: Screams From Shadowed Places*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Žižek, S. (2011) *Living in the End Times*, London: Verso.
- Zlosnik, S. (2011) *Patrick McGrath*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

FURTHER READING

- Bragard, V., et al. (eds) (2011). *Portraying 9/11: Essays in Representation in Comics, Literature, Film, and Theater*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland. (Studies of fictionalizations of 9/11, several of which have Gothic elements.)
- Hornung, A. (2011) "Terrorist Violence and Transnational Memory: Jonathan Safran Foer and Don DeLillo," in U. Udo (ed.) *Transnational American Memories*, Berlin: de Gruyter. (An analysis of why semi-Gothic fictions about 9/11 must refer intertextually outside American history.)
- Versluys, K. (2009) *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*, New York: Columbia University Press. (The first major critical study of 9/11 as it is differently reworked in various kinds of novels, some of them Gothic.)

This page intentionally left blank

PART II

GOTHIC SPACES



This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER EIGHT

GOTHIC AND THE ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION, 1740–1840



Nicole Reynolds

In eighteenth-century Britain, antiquarian efforts to evaluate and canonize the Nation's most enduring early authors were closely associated with an archaeological enthusiasm for the study and recovery of what was perceived to be a native architectural style: a renewed appreciation of buildings – both extant and ruined – from the Middle Ages. Indeed, literary scholars frequently drew an analogy between Gothic architecture and British authors who were understood to have worked outside the classical tradition. In 1715, John Hughes introduced his edition of Spenser with the assertion that to compare the *Faery Queen* with

Models of Antiquity, would be like drawing a Parallel between the *Roman* and the *Gothick* architecture. In the first there is doubtless a more natural Grandeur and Simplicity: in the latter we find great Mixtures of Beauty and Barbarism yet assisted by the Invention of a Variety of inferior Ornaments; and tho the former is more majestick in the whole, the latter may be very surprising and agreeable in its Parts.

(Hughes 1715: lx–lxi)

Pope's Preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1725) concludes with the claim that Shakespeare's works should be considered as "an ancient majestick piece of *Gothick* Architecture, compar'd with a neat Modern building: The latter is more elegant and more glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn" (Pope 1725: xxiii). And in his 1762 *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, Richard Hurd advocated a critical method for evaluating poetry of the Middle Ages through architectural analogy: "When an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian rules, he finds nothing but deformity . . . the same observation holds of the two sorts of poetry" (Hurd 1762: 61). When readers judge a text like the *Faery Queen* according to classical models, they are "shocked with it's [*sic*] disorder"; considering it "with an eye to it's [*sic*] Gothic original," they will see its regularity (Hurd 1762: 61–62). By 1803, the Gothic tradition in literature and architecture had come to be described in archetypally Romantic terms. In his *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, William Godwin notes that Grecian architecture "is like the poetry of an Augustan age . . . harmonious,

uniformly majestic, and gently persuasive,” while Gothic architecture “is like the poetry of a ruder and more daring period.” Here, the artist

does not stoop to conform himself to elaborate rules; he yields to the native suggestions of his sublime and untutored fancy; he astonishes the observer and robs him of himself; the heart of man acknowledges more occasions of sympathy, of affection and feeling in his productions, than in the laboured and accurate performances of a more enlightened age.

(Godwin 1803: 143)

For Godwin, Tom Duggett concludes, the Gothic aesthetic becomes “a vehicle for the transmission of a forward-looking mentality through the unenlightened middle ages” (Duggett 2010: 59).

These editors and antiquarians lauded Gothic’s mixture of beauty and barbarism, strength and solemnity; its element of surprise and corresponding emphasis on ornamental detail; its seeming disorder and irregularity. The Gothic privileges innovation, impulse and imagination over rule, conformity and reason. Chris Brooks notes that scholars like these “helped invent a cultural genesis independent of neoclassicism’s logical prescriptions, one more tangled in history and character, more native, more primitive – an inheritance bolder and darker” (Brooks 1999: 110). The Gothic values what the Enlightenment swept under the rug; and some in the eighteenth century wanted to lift the rug, to revel in the imaginative associations of Britain’s native artistic traditions. Scholars – like those cited above – did so by writing Britain’s literary history, celebrating, for example, the “fantastic and supernatural” in Spenser or the psychological intensity of Shakespeare’s characters (Lewis 2002: 13); contemporary poets, novelists and playwrights did so by revivifying elements of this literary and architectural inheritance in new modes and genres, exploring the irrationality that neoclassical aesthetics had suppressed. And, as this set of motifs, images and plots coalesced into a readily identifiable literary genre, it sparked a revival of the Gothic style first in domestic, and eventually in public, architecture.

“ONE ONLY WANTS PASSIONS TO FEEL GOTHIC”: POETRY, ARCHAEOLOGY, MELANCHOLY

From the outset, Gothic literature drew inspiration from Gothic architecture, though at times the literary sentiment seems only loosely tied to specific architectural features: ivy-covered monastic ruins or arched windows overlooking a churchyard, decrepit and owl-infested. Gothic was embraced as an architectural style native to Britain; the style of its historic castles and churches and study of these buildings, both extant and ruined, fueled a literary enthusiasm for Gothic’s associated charms: chivalry, piety, the otherworldly. A group of poets – chief among them Edward Young, Robert Blair and Thomas Gray – wrote poems infused with melancholia and littered with ruins: crumbling monasteries and castles that bespoke a “universal transience” (Brooks 1999: 111). Dubbed the Graveyard School by twentieth-century literary critics, these poets introduced vocabulary and imagery that became endemic to the Gothic novel.

Robert Blair’s *The Grave* (1743), a nightmarish rumination upon life’s brevity, is perhaps one of the earliest and most frequently cited examples of the mid-century

Gothic impulse in literature. The poetic persona stages a *danse macabre* in the sinister shadows of a Gothic church:

The Wind is up: Hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now, I never heard a Sound so dreary:
Doors creak, and Windows clap, and Night's foul Bird
Rook'd in the Spire screams loud: The gloomy Isles
Black-plaster'd, and hung round with Shreds of 'Scutcheons
And tatter'd Coats of Arms, send back the Sound
Laden with heavier Airs, from the low Vaults
The Mansions of the Dead. Rous'd from their Slumbers
In grim Array the grisly Spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen
Pass and repass, hush'd as the Foot of Night.
Again! the Screech-Owl shrieks: Ungracious sound!
I'll hear no more, it makes one's Blood run chill.

(Blair 1743: 4-5)

The restless, uneasy natural world registers the encroaching supernatural; the church's "gloomy Isles [Aisles]," desecrated by the "sullen" stalking of the living dead, bear the detritus of familial, ancestral honors. The poet piles up images inspired by Gothic architecture – though not deeply invested in the specifics of its material or aesthetic accomplishments – to impress upon readers the lesson, as Thomas Gray put it in his 1751 "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," that the "Paths of glory lead but to the Grave" (Gray 1751: 7).

Antiquarian, literary historian and poet Thomas Warton also worked in this vein, but in the course of his career linked his archaeological and literary pursuits in concrete ways, summoning Gothic's architectural forms and poetic tropes repeatedly as he refereed the (seemingly endless) contest between Gothic and classical aesthetics. In his 1747 *Pleasures of Melancholy*, Warton lauds the "happiest art" that adorns Alexander Pope's "Attic page," but finds that his mind "with sweeter transport glow[s] . . . / In magic SPENSER'S wildly-warbled song" (Warton 1747: 13). The poetic persona longs to follow Melancholy to her "fav'rite midnight haunts" spots he finds most "congenial with [his] soul": "ruin'd seats," "twilight cells and bow'rs" (Warton 1747: 5, 4):

Beneath yon' ruin'd Abbey's moss-grown piles
Oft let me sit, at twilight hour of Eve,
Where thro' some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
While sullen sacred silence reigns around,
Save the lone Screech-owl's note, whose bow'r is built
Amid the mould'ring caverns dark and damp,
And the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
Of flaunting Ivy, that with mantle green
Invests some sacred tow'r.

(Warton 1747: 6)

Warton introduces abbey ruins, and from this image of dereliction goes on to describe the delirium of religious ecstasy induced by the “embowered Roof,” “deep dome” and “Gothic vaults” (16–17) of ecclesiastical architecture. Warton’s poem reverses history’s course, imaginatively re-erecting buildings left to ruin in the wake of Henry VIII’s break from Rome.

Another of Warton’s tributes to Spenser, *Observations on The Faerie Queene* (1754), features what Kenneth Clark has called the first published attempt to trace the progress of Gothic architecture in England (Clark 1995: 40–41). But that same year, Clark points out, another antiquarian published remarks on the Gothic, remarks that – perhaps in part due to the author’s subsequent fame as a builder and novelist – would prove more influential in shaping public enthusiasm for medieval architecture and romance, especially in contrast to neoclassical aesthetics. In his *Anecdotes of Painting*, Horace Walpole describes Gothic’s strong emotional appeal, its capacity to trigger imaginative associations:

it is difficult for the noblest Grecian temple to convey half so many impressions to the mind, as a cathedral does of the best Gothic taste . . . one must have taste to be sensible of the beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passions to feel Gothic.

(Walpole 1762: 107–8)

He praises the work of those who “exhausted their knowledge of the passions in composing edifices whose pomp, mechanism, vaults, tombs, painted windows, gloom and perspectives infused such sensations of romantic devotion” (Walpole 1762: 107): a world of superstition, mystery and pageantry that paradoxically suggested both sensual voluptuousness and physical abstinence, spiritual ecstasy and carnal sobriety.

At this point, Walpole was roughly ten years into the elaborate Gothicization of his Twickenham villa, Strawberry Hill, and two years away from publishing what is generally acknowledged to be the first Gothic novel: *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). For Walpole, these two projects were inextricably linked, and his lasting example – as a writer, builder, and sexual “outsider,” to use Timothy Mowl’s term (Mowl 1996) – provided a foil for artists and critics well into the nineteenth century, a shibboleth for a bygone era whose merits and relevance were hardly secure in a time of revolution, war, industrialization and *laissez-faire* capitalism.

FILLED WITH “GOTHIC STORY”: BUILDING, WRITING AND LIVING IN GOTHIC

Building and writing were inseparable to Walpole for the last 50 or so years of his life. Likewise, Gothic construction and design preoccupied subsequent writers who responded to Walpole’s example. One such figure, William Beckford, acknowledged – with distaste – the obvious similarities between their literary, architectural and antiquarian pursuits. “Walpole hated me,” he claims:

I began Fonthill [his gargantuan Gothic showplace] two or three years before his death. Mischief-making people annoyed him by saying I intended to buy up all

his nic-nackery when he was dead. Some things I might have wished to possess – a good deal I would not have taken as a gift. The place was a miserable child’s box – a species of Gothic mousetrap – a reflection of Walpole’s littleness.

(Fothergill 1979: 267)

Setting aside, for the moment, Beckford’s unease at being (mis)identified with Walpole, a look at the two men’s use of the Gothic idiom in their homes and in their prose reveals striking continuities over time and across creative disciplines. For both men, Gothic domestic space offered deeply personal, idiosyncratic sites for self-presentation, permitting at once the private cultivation of taste, talents and pleasures, as well as the highly orchestrated public display of themselves. For both Walpole and Beckford, Gothic architecture inspired Gothic stories: “nonprogressive fiction of pure setting,” where the limits of desire and fears of the unknown (or of its intrusion upon the self) are mapped spatially (Harbison 2000: 85). In Walpole’s *Otranto* (1764) and Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786), distortion of scale and perspective within and around architectural space invites ontological doubt that can be both pleasurable and threatening. Uncanny, oneiric architectural spaces both manifest and resist political and sexual power; architecture alternately hides and exposes the oppressions of patriarchy and heteronormativity.

Comparing Walpole and Beckford sheds light on the broader cultural reception of Gothic over time: its elastic adaptation to different historical and cultural pressures; the values and virtues it assumed, and those it cast off. To Byron, for example – himself at once archetypal Romantic hero and belated Augustan – Walpole was the “‘Ultimus Romanorum’ . . . father of the first romance . . . in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer” (Byron 1986: 305). In 1821, Byron regrets that “it is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole” even as he – and many others in the early decades of the nineteenth century – embraced Beckford’s transgressive genius.

Closely advised by his “Committee of Taste” (engraver Richard Bentley and connoisseur John Chute), Walpole’s renovations to what was originally an unremarkable Twickenham villa unfolded in a piecemeal process: sometimes painstakingly hesitant, sometimes greedily impetuous. In the ten years or so before he wrote *Otranto*, Walpole was consumed by the details of Strawberry Hill’s Gothic designs and decor. To the building’s facade he added battlements, pointed arch and quatrefoil windows, cloisters and an oratory; within, he built a new entry hall, staircase, parlor, library, a “Holbein Chamber,” cabinet and gallery. He opened the house to sightseers in 1763; the following year, the anonymous publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (and Walpole’s eventual admission of authorship) secured him fame as the progenitor of Gothic romance in modern architecture and prose.

Strawberry Hill was designed to be a highly theatrical, performative space reflecting the taste, erudition and personality of its owner. Walpole displayed his idiosyncratic collections of art and *objets de vertu* according to principles of sentiment rather than science, emphasizing visual and emotional impact rather than provenance or authenticity. Walpole made clear in his *Description of the Villa* (1784) that various artifacts around the house signaled his membership of an intimate, all-male coterie of antiquarians, aesthetes and pleasure seekers; as George Haggerty has argued of his letters, Walpole’s expression of devotion to these men “creates the



Figure 8.1. “North Front of Strawberry Hill,” from Horace Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (Twickenham: Strawberry Hill, 1784)

impression of secrecy precisely where an erotic self might be” (Haggerty 1999: 154). Strawberry Hill similarly locates Walpole’s secret, erotic nature; as Anne Williams has argued, “Walpole’s literary and architectural Gothic are concrete performances of his own identity, an identity not yet named as ‘homosexual’ in the eighteenth century, but already performed” and implicitly aberrant (Williams 2000: 115). Walpole’s Gothic idiom participates in the culture that emerges around modes of representing, rather than naming, a desire that operates outside of normative ideologies.

At the time Walpole wrote *Otranto*, his head was, as he famously wrote, “filled . . . with Gothic story”; he was also embroiled in a parliamentary scandal that struck near to his heart and exposed to punishing public scrutiny the nature and conduct of his most intimate relationships. Walpole confessed privately to the connection between *Otranto*, Strawberry Hill and politics in a now famous letter to antiquary William Cole, dated March 9, 1765:

I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which, all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the upper-most banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it – add that I was very glad to think of anything rather than politics.

(Walpole 1937–83: 1.88)

Walpole had encouraged his cousin and fellow parliamentarian Henry Conway to join him in protesting the arrest (for seditious libel) of John Wilkes, MP and publisher of the weekly oppositional newspaper *The North Britain*. Conway's subsequent dismissal from his regimental and civil posts was accompanied by a defamatory pamphlet from William Guthrie, published in May 1764, to which Walpole indignantly responded in a pamphlet published on August 2 of that year. According to Walpole's letters, *Otranto* was written at the same time – June and July of 1764 – that he would have been preparing his impassioned defense of Conway's character: a defense that struck Guthrie, for one, as feminine and amorous. By the end of August 1764, Guthrie had responded to Walpole, suggesting that he belonged to a third sex and broadly insinuating that his "passionate fondness" (Guthrie 1764: 6) for Conway was homoerotic. Thus *Otranto* has its origins in the interplay of Walpole's various outsider positions and in his efforts to control the terms according to which he expressed them: his preference for Gothic in a predominantly neoclassical age, his opposition to the repressive measures undertaken by Lord Grenville's ministry, and his love of men.

In *Otranto*, Walpole introduced the repertoire of spatial tropes, inspired by the gloomier associations of ecclesiastical and castle architecture, that became essential to Gothic fiction: subterranean vaults, twisted passageways, trapdoors, secret compartments and moonlit galleries. In and around the novel's central castle, Walpole plays with perspective and scale; indeed, the plot hinges upon a crisis of scale that has its origins in Walpole's own sense of place in Strawberry Hill. In a 1754 letter to Bentley, Walpole – ever conscious of his own diminutive stature – comically juxtaposes the correctness of his situation with the inappropriate proportions of someone who just doesn't fit in. Walpole writes that he "can't conceive" how the corpulent Duke of Cumberland had entered Strawberry Hill. "I should have figured him like Gulliver," Walpole continues, "cutting down some of the largest oaks in Windsor Forest to make jointstools, in order to straddle over the battlements and peep in at the windows of Lilliput" (Walpole 1937–83: 35.161). While a miniature Walpole in his miniature house asserts "a principle of balance and equivalence," the gigantic Duke "presents a physical world of disorder and disproportion" (Stewart 1993: 46, 74). For Swift's satiric purposes, of course, Lilliput confounded the newly gigantic Gulliver with the ontological uncertainty that a change of perspective can induce. For Walpole, as for Swift, monstrosity is relative and in the Gothic world, relatives, needless to say, can be monstrous.

"The Castle and Lordship of Otranto," an ancient prophecy had pronounced, "should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it" (Walpole 2003: 73). Literally small enough to fit inside, the impostor Manfred's self-aggrandizing schemes render him metaphorically too large – unfit – to inhabit the castle, even as the *disjecti membra* of the legitimate owner's ghostly, dilated body are gradually reassembled to overthrow the oppressor and restore the rightful heir. Theodore, however, inherits a destroyed castle and wins a bride he does not love; the wills and desires of the novel's several patriarchs – not only the usurper Manfred but also the dispossessed Alfonso and the heroic Frederic – have made Otranto's purchase not worth the price (Just 1997: 92). Manfred's son Conrad, moments before the marriage that would serve to continue Manfred's line, is crushed beneath crusader Alfonso's helmet, a symbol of the martial violence upon which patrimony and political power are too often based; Manfred's determination to

create another male heir triggers an incestuous lust for his would-be daughter-in-law Isabella; Frederic's unwanted attentions to Manfred's daughter Matilda cause her to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, where she is mistaken for Isabella and murdered by a jealous Manfred. Haggerty notes that in *Otranto* "the heteronormativity of paternal power is itself the perversion" (Haggerty 1999: 162), and this observation bears out in the novel's myriad depictions of sexual violence. In *Otranto* worldly power, coded as political and sexual, is routinely, almost uniformly abused.

Otranto ends with an elegiac gesture. The castle's ruin becomes Alfonso's "frail memorial" and provides a landscape over which a mournful Theodore – in the tradition of the Graveyard School – contemplates the "melancholy that had taken possession of his soul" (Walpole 2003: 112). Walpole's familial plot undercuts the romance formula's tidy resolution in marriage and the promise of domestic bliss; it is literally and figuratively impossible for Theodore to retreat to the comforts of home. The archetypal Gothic plot can be said to have its origins in the fate of a house: real and imagined, architectural and ancestral.

In the midst of renovations to Strawberry Hill, Walpole evidences an anxiety about the impermanence of his literary and architectural constructions. In a 1761 letter to Conway, Walpole flirts with the idea of Strawberry Hill's (and its owner's) inevitable dissolution: "My buildings . . . like my writings . . . will be blown away in ten years after I am dead; if they had not the substantial use of amusing me while I live, they would be worth little indeed" (Walpole 1937–83: 38.110). Walpole anticipates that he will find himself in a position not unlike his character Theodore's: at once the producer and consumer of ruins.

William Beckford, self-fashioned and self-conscious foil to Walpole, was also a creator of ruins. The outsized central tower of his spectacular Gothic retreat, Fonthill Abbey, collapsed for the final time (after two earlier, smaller-scale cave-ins) in 1825, taking down much of the remaining structure with it. Fortunately for Beckford, all of this happened only after financial difficulties had compelled him to sell. Given its notoriously hurried and shoddy craftsmanship, Fonthill Abbey's demise had seemed inevitable to many, including architect C.F. Porden, who in 1823 had fatefully pronounced: "Would to God it had been more substantially built! But as it is, its ruins will tell a tale of wonder" (quoted in Alexander 1962: 167). While Beckford's most extravagant architectural achievement did not outlast him, his literary fame and personal notoriety did. Before Fonthill's ruins would tell their tale, Beckford had spun wondrous stories inspired by Gothic presentation and plotting of architectural space.

In an 1838 letter that recalls the magic of a December 1781 Christmas party at his father's Palladian mansion, Fonthill Splendens, Beckford waxes rhapsodic over stage designer Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg's various machinations: tricks of stagecraft that transformed the Palladian austerity of Splendens into "the realization of romance in its most extravagant intensity" (Alexander 1962: 81). Beckford recalls how Loutherbourg's "combination of seductive influences" cast his "young and fervid bosom" into a "delirium of delight." Beckford and his friends, "lovely beings, in all the freshness of their early bloom," wander "hand in hand" through a series of rooms that offer something to satisfy all the senses (Fothergill 1979: 113): wreaths of smoke from burning wood alone obscure the "uniform splendor" of the gilded roofs; melodies issue from unseen choirs; tables of "delicious viands and fragrant flowers" glide before them with the aid of hidden mechanisms (Alexander 1962: 81).

Loutherbourg's lighting effects, especially, entrance the revelers:

The glowing haze investing every object, the mystic look, the vastness, the intricacy of this vaulting labyrinth occasioned so bewildering an effect that it became impossible for anyone to define at the moment where he stood, where he had been, or to whither he was wandering; such was the confusion, the perplexity so many illuminated storeys of infinitely varied apartments gave rise to.

(Alexander 1962: 81)

Describing his 1781 *Splendens* party, Beckford recalls the “strange, necromantic light which Loutherbourg had thrown over what absolutely appeared a realm of Fairy, or rather, perhaps, a Demon Temple deep beneath the earth set apart for tremendous mysteries” (Fothergill 1979: 113); he indicates that he and his guests most likely previewed one of Loutherbourg's upcoming attractions at the *Eidophusikon*, a wildly popular London show of moving images accompanied by dramatic lighting and sound effects. In January 1822, he introduced a representation of “SATAN arraying his TROOPS on the BANKS of the FIERY LAKE, with the Raising of the PALACE of PANDEMONIUM, from Milton” (quoted in Baugh 1990: 79). In 1824, the artist W.H. Pyne recalled this newest spectacle from Loutherbourg, in which “a chaotic mass rigid in dark majesty . . . gradually assumed form until it stood, the interior of a vast temple of gorgeous architecture, bright as molten brass, seemingly composed of unconsuming and unquenchable fire.” Peals of thunder and groans seeming to issue from “infernal spirits” accompanied the tableau (quoted in Alexander 1962: 83–84). While this display seems calculated to inspire fear, Beckford's account of the *Splendens* party describes Gothic necromancy and mystery as an experience offering less fear than enchantment or absorption, less *frisson* than sensory satiation, even overload.

Like Walpole's *Otranto*, Beckford's *Vathek* was inspired by an oneiric rendering of architectural space. “I composed *Vathek*,” he later insisted, while “thoroughly imbued with all that passed at Fonthill during this voluptuous festival” (Fothergill 1979: 115). In this description of the long-ago party, Beckford summons the image of *Vathek*'s palaces dedicated to the five senses, and of the subterranean hall of Eblis, where *Vathek* and Nouronihar confront a room that, “though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty, that, at first, they took it for an immeasurable plain” (Beckford 1983: 109). In Eblis, as in Fonthill *Splendens*, rows of columns and arcades diminish to a radiant point; as the lovers move toward it, censers of burning wood aloft, tables laden with delicacies and music from an unseen source entertain their senses.

In these biographical and fictional accounts of architectural space, Beckford underscores the bewildering effect of vastness. “Immeasurable,” haze-filled architecture confuses senses of space and time; subjects do not know where they stand, where they have been, or where they are going. This ontological crisis dissolves boundaries between self and world, making possible a fluid range of sensual and erotic experience. Robert Miles has argued that through its pervasive treatment of such psychological conditions as mania and reverie – both prevalent in Beckford's fictional and autobiographical writings – Gothic texts negotiate the relationship between sexuality and the unstable, fragmented self (Miles 2002: 7). *Vathek*'s multiple “perversities” – his aggressive, acquisitive and seemingly insatiable heterosexuality,

his simultaneous attraction to and repulsion by male bodies both beautiful and abject – frame a pointed critique of bourgeois heteronormativity’s prohibitions.

Throughout the novel, exaggerated and relative scale posits both the apex and futility of Vathek’s ambition. Faust-like, Vathek builds a tower so that he might “penetrat[e] the secrets of heaven,” only to find the stars as far away from the top of the tower as they are from the ground. The antidote for this “unwelcome perception of his littleness” is the “thought of being great in the eyes of others” (Beckford 1983: 4). If revels at Fonthill Splendens inspired *Vathek*, the eponymous (anti)hero’s tower, in turn, might be said to have nurtured Beckford’s desire for his own tower: a monument to his solitary genius, a site of retreat and contemplation, and perhaps also a bit of self-mockery. Beckford and his architect, James Wyatt, famous for working in the Gothic idiom and eventually notorious for his reckless “restorations” of medieval churches, began working on Fonthill Abbey in earnest in 1796; Beckford made the Abbey his home in 1807 (having demolished Fonthill Splendens); the Abbey was completed in 1818, just four years before Beckford was forced to sell it and seven years before its ruin. Among Fonthill Abbey’s most distinctive features was its immense size: the octagonal tower, built to rival that of Salisbury Cathedral; the 30 foot-high pointed arch entrance door; and two 100 foot-long galleries designed to display Beckford’s enormous collections of art and objects.



Figure 8.2 Plate 11, “View of the West, & North Fronts,” from John Rutter, *Delineations of Fonthill and its Abbey* (London: Charles Knight, 1823)

Beckford's precipitous, maniacal frenzy to complete Fonthill Abbey, the most ambitious of his Gothic stories, recalls Loutherbouurg's vision of Pandemonium and Pyne's description of it. Their terms echo in Beckford's account of Fonthill's night-time construction:

It's really stupendous, the spectacle here at night – the number of people at work . . . the innumerable torches suspended everywhere, the immense and endless spaces, the gulph below; above, the gigantic spider's web of scaffolding – especially when, standing under the finished and numberless arches of the galleries, I listen to the reverberating voices in the stillness of the night, and see immense buckets of plaster and water ascending, as if they were drawn up from the bowels of a mine, amid shouts from subterranean depths, oaths from Hell itself, and chanting from Pandemonium.

(Alexander 1962: 166)

At Fonthill, Beckford unapologetically attempts to redeem Hell and *Vathek*'s fictional version thereof. If Eblis attests to the dangers of a sated curiosity, Fonthill was to represent the height of worldly success. If Eblis is a prison, Fonthill was to be a sanctuary. Beckford's analogy between Fonthill and Pandemonium implies a likeness between the two palace builders; Satan's heroism, ambition, ingenuity and passion matches Beckford's own. In 1820, Percy Shelley called Satan the hero of *Paradise Lost* and explained that Satan's appeal lies in the "pernicious casuistry" he engenders in the readers' minds, deleterious reasoning that "leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure" (Shelley 2002: 207). Although Fonthill's eventual fate demonstrated the futility of Beckford's overreaching passions, his was a culture that admired the enormity of the effort.

In an 1834 *Quarterly Review* essay on William Beckford's *Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal*, John Lockhart compares Walpole to Beckford, praising Beckford's prose style with the claim that

on such occasions he reminds us, and will, we think, remind everyone, of the Lord of Strawberry Hill. But even here all we have is on a grander scale . . . He buys a library where the other would cheapen a missal. He is at least a male Horace Walpole: as superior to the "silken Baron," as Fonthill, with its York-like tower embossed among hoary forests, was to that silly band-box which may still be admired on the road to Twickenham.

(Lockhart 1834: 51.429–30)

Almost 30 years after Walpole's death, and exactly 50 years after the teenaged William Courtney's family had accused Beckford of seducing the youth, Lockhart selectively recalls the "silken Baron's" effeminacy but seemingly forgets what the November 27 1784 *Morning Herald* had called Beckford's "*Grammatical mistake* . . . in regard to the genders" (quoted in Chapman 1952: 185). The houses stand in for the men: Lockhart juxtaposes Fonthill/Beckford's grandeur, prodigality, magnificence, masculinity with Strawberry Hill/Walpole's insignificance, thrift, frivolity, femininity. The means justify the end; Beckford's passion, the epic scale of his vision for Fonthill Abbey, compensates for the abject pile that Loudon confronts in 1835.

Grandeur of mind excuses the eccentricities of an ardent temperament or the indiscretions of an effusive and aberrant sexuality. Or, to turn back to Percy Shelley: admirers might argue, through exercises in casuistry, that, like Satan, Beckford's wrongs outnumber his faults.

Though Strawberry Hill and its owner always had their share of critics, Lockhart's receptiveness to Beckford and antipathy toward Walpole are part of a larger cultural trend; in the first decades of the nineteenth century, Walpole invariably suffered in comparison to the man whom many commentators established as his *de facto* rival. The parallels between the two men seemed to demand that they be discussed in tandem, but in the political and cultural climate of Romanticism, so different from the world Walpole was now thought to epitomize, the "silken Baron" would have few advocates.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, B. (1962) *England's Wealthiest Son: A Study of William Beckford*, London: Centaur Press.
- Baugh, C. (1990) *Garrick and Loughborough*, Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey.
- Beckford, W. (1983) *Vathek*, 1786, ed. R. Lonsdale, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blair, R. (1743) *The Grave. A Poem*, London: Cooper.
- Brooks, C. (1999) *The Gothic Revival*, London: Phaidon.
- Byron, G. (1986) *Marino Faliero*, 1821, in J. McGann and B. Weller (eds) *Complete Poetical Works*, vol. 4, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chapman, G. (1952) *Beckford*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis.
- Clark, K. (1995) *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste*, 1962, London: John Murray.
- Duggett, T. (2010) *Gothic Romanticism: Architecture, Politics, and Literary Form*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fothergill, B. (1979) *Beckford of Fonthill*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Godwin, W. (1803) *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Early English Poet*, vol. 1, London: Phillips.
- Gray, T. (1751) *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, 4th edn, London.
- Guthrie, W. (1764) *Reply to the Counter-address*, London.
- Haggerty, G. (1999) *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harbison, R. (2000) *Eccentric Spaces*, 1977, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hughes, J. (ed.) (1715) *The Works of Mr. Edmund Spenser*, vol. 1, London.
- Hurd, R. (1762) *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, London.
- Just, M. (1997) *Visions of Evil: Origins of Violence in the English Gothic Novel*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Lewis, M. (2002) *The Gothic Revival*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Lockhart, J. (1834) Review of *Italy: With Sketches of Spain and Portugal*, *Quarterly Review* 51: 426–56.
- Miles, R. (2002) *Gothic Writing 1750–1820: A Genealogy*, 1993, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mowl, T. (1996) *Horace Walpole: The Great Outsider*, London: John Murray.
- Pope, A. (ed.) (1725) *The Works of Shakespeare*, vol. 1, London.
- Shelley, P. (2002) Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820, in D. Reiman and N. Fraistat (eds) *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, New York: Norton.

- Stewart, S. (1993) *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 1984, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Walpole, H. (1762) *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. 1, Twickenham: Strawberry Hill.
- (1784) *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole*, 1774, Twickenham: Strawberry Hill.
- (1937–83) *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- (2003) *The Castle of Otranto and The Mysterious Mother*, 1764 and 1768, ed. F. Frank, Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Warton, T. (1747) *The Pleasures of Melancholy. A Poem*, London: Dodsley.
- Williams, A. (2000) "Monstrous Pleasures: Horace Walpole, Opera, and the Conception of Gothic," *Gothic Studies*, 2.1: 104–18.

FURTHER READING

- Aldrich, M. (1997) *Gothic Revival*, London: Phaidon. (Surveys the revival of the Gothic style in British domestic architecture from the early eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries.)
- Bayer-Berenbaum, L. (1982) *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*, East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses. (Focusing on architecture and literature, this book describes an interdisciplinary Gothic aesthetic.)
- McCarthy, M. (1987) *The Origins of the Gothic Revival*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (Excellent chapters on Gothic Revival's textual background, garden buildings and the domestic architecture of Walpole and his circle.)
- Ostergard, D. (ed.) (2001) *William Beckford, 1760–1844: An Eye for the Magnificent*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Catalogue published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title: essays on Beckford's architecture, gardening, and collecting.)
- Morrissey, L. (1999) *From the Temple to the Castle: An Architectural History of British Literature, 1660–1760*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. (Studies the relationship between literature and architecture in the works of eighteenth-century gentleman author-architects ranging from John Vanbrugh to Horace Walpole.)
- Reynolds, N. (2010) *Building Romanticism: Literature and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (Examines the relationship between literature and architecture in Romantic Britain in chapters on windows, boudoirs, cottages, and Sir John Soane's house-museum.)
- Sodin, M. (ed.) (2009) *Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (This volume accompanied an exhibition of the same title: it features essays on Walpole's collecting, building, writing, and reading.)
- Townshend, D. (2011) "Improvement and Repair: Architecture, Romance and the Politics of Gothic, 1790–1817," *Literature Compass* 8/10: 712–38. (Richly detailed and historicized account of how the notion of architectural renovation and restoration is treated in a range of Gothic novels.)
- Wainwright, C. (1989) *The Romantic Interior: the British Collector at Home, 1750–1850*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (An important study of the relationship between collectors, collections and domestic space: contains chapters on Strawberry Hill and Fonthill Abbey.)

CHAPTER NINE

GOTHIC GEOGRAPHY,
1760–1830

—♦—

Benjamin A. Brabon

Landscape has a talismanic significance for Gothic fictions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In particular, the figuring of European settings in British Gothic novels and romances from the period 1760 to 1830 serves as a means to explore social anxieties at home and abroad. From debates about the impact of enclosure to the rituals of Catholicism, foreign geographies afforded the opportunities to displace the fundamental fears of the time in order to interrogate their effect and influence on British society from a safe distance. As this chapter contends, strange and uncanny spaces became central to an emerging Gothic aesthetic in the late eighteenth century. For example, authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and Charles Maturin utilize sublime and picturesque settings to ground characters and political ideas in the unsettling geographic spaces of Europe while commenting on events closer to home. In addition, Gothic texts from this period often narrate a dislocation in the home/nation caused by the transformation of geographic space into alienating and/or incorporating sites. Within this context, the remote geographies of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Gothic fictions are both troubling and troubled locales that encapsulate the drama of Britain's genesis as a modern nation.

GOTHIC SPACES

Gothic texts in the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century interrogate the location of the Other and its relationship to a sense of English national identity. For Schmitt,

The “anxiety of a displaced – or displaceable – population” that Jacques Derrida . . . finds at the base of all “national rootedness” is an anxiety the Gothic insistently puts to work: threat of invasion from without produces Englishness within. But if Continental Europe, the East, or South America provides an antithesis against which Englishness might be elaborated, their menacing and alluring alterity eventually makes good on its threat. The English are displaced,

figuratively if not physically: their Englishness admits Otherness, and England itself becomes an alien nation.

(Schmitt 1997: 3)

The threat of Otherness posed by Europe, the East and/or South America defines English national identity, consolidating its form as a model of resistance against an ultimately unstoppable external assault. Here, Gothic texts play on a Derridean anxiety concerning the potential displacement of English national identity through the admission of Otherness into the nation. Gothic fiction from this period engages with the uncanny process of defining the British nation: “On the one hand, Gothics pose as semi-ethnographic texts in their representation of Catholic, Continental Europe or the Far East as fundamentally un-English, the site of depravity. On the other, a notion of Englishness is itself constituted in the novels” (Schmitt 1997: 2). Gothic narratives recount how the monstrous Other is repelled and geographically displaced, while simultaneously revealing that it already inhabits the central ground of an English national sense of identity. In other words, the Other is located and defined as geographically removed and psychologically internalized: both outside and inside the borders of an emerging sense of Britishness. The importance of these unsettling localities in the development of a Gothic aesthetic between 1760 and 1830 can be traced back to the shifting geography and identity of Britain during the eighteenth century.

GEOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS

In the eighteenth century, England’s landscape was shaped by changes in agricultural practice, enclosure and economic imperatives. At the heart of these transformations of England was a conflict between “old” and “new” money that was literally molding the landscape according to fashion and taste. This conflict in the English countryside centered on issues of property, ownership, legitimacy and improvement. In particular, the *nouveaux riches* were, as Humphry Repton explains, altering the landscape of England and in so doing, transforming the identity of the nation:

by cutting down the timber and getting an act to enclose the common, [they] had doubled all the rents. The old mossy and ivy-covered pale was replaced by a new and lofty close paling; not to confine the deer, but to exclude mankind . . . the bench was gone, the ladder-stile was changed to a caution about man-traps and spring-guns, and a notice that the footpath was stopped by order of the commissioners.

(Repton 1816: 193)

These changes to the look of the landscape of England signaled shifts in the identity of the nation, as ancient historical connections between being and place were disrupted. During the course of the eighteenth century, the geographic space of the nation was divided up and partitioned, creating fixed and often impermeable boundaries within the national landscape. The driving force behind these improvements to the landscape was economic. The force of progress eroded and produced the landscape of England, dividing up the countryside into regularly shaped fields. As “the

modern chequer-board pattern of small, squarish fields, enclosed by hedgerows of hawthorn, with new roads running more or less straight and wide across the parish in all directions” was created, the “immemorial landscape of the open fields, with their complex pattern of narrow strips, their winding green balks or cart-roads, their headlands and grassy footpaths” was destroyed (Hoskins 1955: 179). The epicenter of this transformation of the English landscape was located in the very heart of the country, the most visible and pronounced metamorphosis taking place in the Midlands:

The parliamentary enclosure movement had its most pronounced effects in the Midlands and in eastern England, in a solid block of sixteen counties. The Record Offices of these counties possess a considerable number of awards made by the commissioners, often accompanied by a map showing the new lay-out of the parish, with the fields and roads marked out pretty much as we know them today.

(Hoskins 1955: 186)

This new map of England’s geography signaled both the demise of medieval farming practices and the erosion of what was romanticized in the period as an English landscape dating back to the beginnings of time. This image of England’s unspoiled geography, still in its primeval freshness and untouched by humankind, provided both the site of transformation and destruction, as well as the source for inspiration and renewal that would be explored by Gothic and Romantic authors. For Wordsworth, for example, this meant looking beyond human influences on the landscape by trying to see an English geography first formed by nature:

He will form to himself an image of the tides visiting and re-visiting the friths, the main sea dashing against the bolder shore, the rivers pursuing their course to be lost in the mighty mass of waters. He may see or hear in fancy the winds sweeping over the lakes, or piping with a loud voice among the mountain peaks and, lastly, may think of the primaeval woods shedding and renewing their leaves with no human eye to notice, or human heart to regret or welcome change.

(Wordsworth 1822: 38)

The image that Wordsworth creates of the Lake District and the nation as a whole prior to the intervention of humankind captures the timeless and enduring quality of the natural world. In particular, Wordsworth’s description exposes an unrestrained and unrestricted landscape that constantly evolves and replenishes itself, free from the burden of human intervention. Wordsworth alludes to a nation not yet shaped by the economic and ideological forces of land reform: a distinct space ripe for harvesting Gothic visions of dislocation and haunting in the face of change and destruction.

Gothic texts from this period interrogate the force of these geographic transformations, revealing “the novelty and constructedness of the nation” (Schmitt 1997: 167). As Hobsbawm confirms, modern nations constantly endeavor to conceal their artificially constructed nature. “Modern nations and all their impediments generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the

opposite of constructed, namely human communities so ‘natural’ as to require no definition other than self-assertion” (Hobsbawn 1983:14). The modern nation is paradoxically defined by “new,” “original,” imaginative and fictive constructs, while simultaneously being obsessed with the need to appear firmly fixed in antiquity and the past. In fact, it seeks to mask its inherent duplicity through the fabrication of a singular national origin and history founded upon a homogenized national setting. Within this context, Gothic texts expose the inventedness and constructedness of the modern nation, attacking modernity’s assumptions and undermining its projection of rootedness. According to Schmitt, Gothic is “a dangerous tool for nation-making insofar as it lays bare modernity’s selective use of the past” (Schmitt 1997: 167). Gothic fiction exists on the “cusp” of this knotty intersection of the old and the new, antiquity and modernity (Miles 1995). In this sense, Gothic tackles the fictive nature of the modern nation head-on, exposing its artificiality and novelty, while locating itself on the very threshold of modernity. Gothic texts from the period utilize uncanny and Othered geographic locales to examine displacements and anxieties at the core of the British nation’s experience of modernity.

GOTHIC LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) sets the scene within the Gothic tradition for the figuring of European locations as a means to explore political misdemeanors and fears at home. Initially, as has been discussed extensively by a number of critics (in particular Hogle 1994), Walpole locates the manuscript of *Otranto* in the Preface to the first edition as a discovered document found in the north of England in the library of a Catholic family and in so doing, creates a frame that situates the text within a remote geographic setting. The further revelation that *Otranto* was printed in Naples, and, written between 1095 and 1243, the product of the crusades, serves to accentuate the geographic displacement of the events in the text toward an Italianate location. At the same time, by locating the discovery of the manuscript in the north of England, the uncanny aspects of location within *Otranto* are sited within the national borders of England. However, as Hogle reminds us,

the first announcement of “Gothic Story” as a mode of writing . . . coincides with the exposure of several deceptions at the start of it all: a counterfeited pedigree, at least two counterfeited authorships, a place-name that was more a word than a known location, a use of symbols from what many now saw as a counterfeited and outmoded form of Christianity, and a generic designation that was less a reference to something authentically medieval and more a label for a combination of existing literary modes.

(Hogle 1994: 26)

From the initial lie of the authorship of the text, to the random setting plucked from a map of Italy and the mingling of existing literary forms, *Otranto* relies upon borrowing, imitation and fakery. Yet for all of this deceit, the geographic space that Walpole represents affords him the opportunity to discuss his conception of authentic literary production – promoting his authorship of *Otranto* in the Preface to the second edition in the shadow of Shakespeare – and national/political identity by

advancing a Whig ideology that relocates the displaced owner of Otranto in what amounts to a defense of the figure of the/his father. For Walpole, the Gothic aesthetic that he establishes in his premier Gothic story is not concerned with opening up the geography of Naples and the surrounding regions, as Ann Radcliffe will do, but rather with projecting his designs onto a geographic space that allows him to explore an ideology that sits opposed to many of the political masters of England in 1764. The foreign and exotic potential of the Italianate locale that Walpole represents in *Otranto* fosters a series of associations for the reader linked to the supposed excesses of Catholicism and corrupt feudal hierarchies. Far enough removed from the English landscape of Walpole's middle-class readers, *Otranto's* geography is unsettling and threatening because of the tyrannical control that Manfred exerts over his family and kingdom. The uncanny sense of setting is confirmed through the resolution that Walpole offers from the ruins of the castle. In a conclusion that confirms Walpole's own conflicted status, divided between his position as an aristocrat and a Whig politician who stood opposed to property law that held a ghostly hand of aristocratic control over the geography of England, Theodore is confirmed as the rightful owner of Otranto through his bloodline relationship with Alfonso and, more importantly, through his virtuous sensibility as he inherits the ruins of Otranto.

Within this context, the terrain of Europe or the English countryside for Walpole does not create the prospect, as it does for Wordsworth, of accessing a landscape that is untouched by human hand, and, by extension, political discord. On the contrary, Walpole's guile exposes the constructed nature of Nature, even in its "original" state, as a Gothic aesthetic is used to deconstruct and lay bare a Romantic vision of place as a series of competing ideologies. This is witnessed in Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1785), when he satirizes Macpherson's *Ossian* by informing the reader that the tales,

were undoubtedly written a little before the creation of the world, and have ever since been preserved, by oral tradition, in the mountains of the Crampcraggiri, an uninhabited island, not yet discovered. Of these few facts, we could have the most authentic attestations of several clergymen, who remember to have heard them repeated by old men long before they, the said clergymen, were born. We do not trouble the reader with these attestations, as we are sure everybody will believe them as much as if they had seen them.

(Walpole 2011: vi)

Walpole lampoons Macpherson's creative attempts, mocking the authenticity of the text and the undiscovered space that gives rise to them. Here in *Hieroglyphic Tales* and in *Otranto*, Walpole advances the possibility of original national writings and ancient mythical histories, only to undercut the connection between authentic literary and national origins.

ANN RADCLIFFE'S ITALIANATE ENGLAND

Walpole's use of foreign locales is a fledgling experiment compared to the masterful accomplishments of Radcliffe's representations of panoramic geographic spaces. For Cynthia Wall, "by the end of the eighteenth century, Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels

... set the pattern for the nineteenth-century practice of unrolling a fully visualised setting for the characters to enter and act upon” (Wall 2004: 120). In particular, Radcliffe explores in her romances the disjunctions and interconnections between the heroine and her inheritance, between property and propriety. It is in and through her literary landscapes that Radcliffe opens up a space for eighteenth-century women, providing “a feminine substitute for the picaresque, where heroines could enjoy all the adventures and alarms that masculine heroes had long experienced, far from home, in fiction” (Moers 1985: 126). Radcliffe’s landscapes thus offer an escape from “the grim realities of eighteenth-century girlhood” (Moers 1985: 136). At the same time, her landscapes contain constant threats to the progress of the heroine back to the safety and security of her native land/home. In this way, Radcliffe engages with the distinctions between internal and external spaces, pastoral scenes and menacing cities, through both the alignment and opposition of character and setting. As Miles notes, “the movement between the sublime and the picturesque becomes the strophe and antistrophe of Radcliffe’s art, a rhythm giving her narratives emotional depth as well as thematic meaning. A set of obvious contrasts immediately arises: wild/domestic; individual/society; nature/nurture” (Miles 1995: 80). Radcliffe’s literary geography – influenced by the paintings of Salvator Rosa – fluctuates between the sublime and picturesque, constructing and questioning binary features found within her landscapes. For instance, in the opening lines of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Radcliffe juxtaposes the sublime vista of “the majestic Pyrenees, whose summits, veiled in clouds . . . were sometimes barren, and gleamed through the blue tinge of air” with the picturesque “soft green of the pastures and woods . . . among whose flocks, and herds, and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose” (Radcliffe 1980: 1). Here, the masculine sublime meets the feminine picturesque, and in so doing, delineating the parameters of the heroine’s movement through this potentially threatening/nurturing geography. Within this context, Radcliffe utilizes European landscapes to situate the heroine’s flight from and return to the home in order to explore eighteenth-century gender identity. Like Walpole’s settings, Radcliffe’s landscapes are equally aware of their contrived nature, but contrastingly, Radcliffe leads her characters and the reader back to an implied “real” geography that, although threatened, is reclaimed or acquired at the end of her texts. Radcliffe recognized that “the archetypal reality of nature was actually the product of a particular style of representation. Her nature, like all natures, was a cultural fashion” (Cottam 1985: 38). Radcliffe’s landscapes are, to use Lefebvre’s word, “produced,” but the trajectory of her heroines moves the reader beyond the construct (Lefebvre 1991: 278). Central to the Gothic aesthetic that Radcliffe develops is the journey of the heroine back into a form of possession/enfranchisement. Her literary geographies and idealized landscapes provide secure and well-defined spaces to re-establish order from chaos, legitimacy from illegitimacy, authenticity from inauthenticity. For instance, the concluding lines to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* reinforce the sense that La Vallée is an “achieved ideal” that Radcliffe promotes at the core of her Gothic aesthetic (Radcliffe 1980: 4):

O! how joyful it is to tell of happiness, such as Valancourt and Emily; . . . restored to each other – to the beloved landscapes of their native country . . . to the pleasures of enlightened society, and to the exercise of the benevolence,

which had always animated their hearts; while the bowers of La Vallée became, once more, the retreat of goodness, wisdom and domestic blessedness!

(Radcliffe 1980: 672)

Emily and Valancourt are directed back to the idyllic space of La Vallée (specifically “the plane-tree on the terrace, where he had first ventured to declare his love”) from the threatening and artificial space of the castle of Udolpho (Radcliffe 1980: 671). That is, Radcliffe restores the rightful owners to their property by reconstituting the panorama of the “original” scene of La Vallée at the beginning of *Udolpho*. In this uncanny return, she restores the boundaries and borders of La Vallée that are constantly attacked and eroded throughout the narrative.

Yet ultimately, Radcliffe’s final destination is not simply the image of the pastoral idyll that, for example, La Vallée embodies, but an implied geographic reality located not in France or Italy but England. Radcliffe may transport her readers to European locations, but what lies beyond these sites is a map of the English countryside:

The marble porticoes and arcades of the villa were shadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia, flowering ash, cedrati, camellias, and majestic palms; . . . The style of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy.

(Radcliffe 2000: 412)

Here, at the end of *The Italian* (1797), as Radcliffe opens up a panoramic vista of “the seas and shores of Naples,” the reader is reminded of the landscape of England



Figure 9.1 *Landscape with Tobias and the Angel*, Salvator Rosa

(Radcliffe 2000: 412). This Italianate image of England, with its pastoral scenes and classical associations, is, according to Radcliffe, not a representation of England lost to the ravages of time and the advance of the tide of modernity, but England “of the present day” (Radcliffe 2000: 412). England remains and endures in Radcliffe’s construction of this pastoral paradise, as the original and authentic template of virtue and good taste, untouched “except ‘Where a long alley peeping on the main,’ exhibited such gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste” (Radcliffe 2000: 412). As Miles contends,

That the style of the gardens should be English, rather than Italian, appears to be in keeping with the romance’s political allegory, whereby the happy, companionate, anti-feudal couple, with values rooted in liberty, individualism, and benevolent sensibility, are figured as modern English, and “natural,” in opposition to the regressive values of a backward-looking aristocracy, who appear as magnificent, but artificial and grandiose.

(Miles 2000: 491)

The distinction between a modern, natural England and an artificial Italian aristocracy identified by Miles is a significant one when considered within the wider context of the rapidly transforming geography of England in the eighteenth century. The shifting economics of rural life during this period produce for Radcliffe uncanny geographies which bear witness to conflicting values competing for ideological dominance. Yet what dominate in Radcliffe’s political allegories are English values forged on the border of a form of modernity experienced in Europe. For instance, thirty years after Walpole invoked Naples in *Otranto*, Radcliffe would open up the geography of the region in *The Italian*, not only to provide her with numerous opportunities for sublime and picturesque descriptions, but also to exploit its relationship with modernity:

Naples . . . bore interesting similarities to Britain. For British visitors to eighteenth-century Italy of a liberal persuasion, Neapolitans appeared to offer a version of themselves, a people apart who were instinctively opposed to the yoke of tyranny and, although ready to take up arms to defend their ancient liberties, were yet loath to adopt revolutionary measures. In their present situation of being ruled by a foreign king . . . they appeared to be in the condition of Britain of a hundred or so years earlier, nobly struggling to realize their freedoms, and become “moderns.”

(Miles 2000: xiv)

Naples offered a historical and political model that combined elements of the feudal and the modern. For instance, the custom of sanctuary witnessed in the Prologue to *The Italian* acts as a sign of Italy’s feudal status. Yet the character of the Italian people contained a commendable enthusiasm and energy for liberty that was readily associated with Englishness. Italy provided Radcliffe with an uncanny landscape of a nation positioned on the border between the old and the new, a feudal aristocracy and a liberal middle class. In this way, Radcliffe’s choice of setting was dictated in part by her desire to create uncanny spaces that were far enough removed from the geography of England, but recognizable for their English political and cultural flavor.

CHARLES MATURIN'S EXOTIC GEOGRAPHIES

The politics of landscape are extended further by Charles Maturin as the geography of the Irish nation becomes a site for the recuperation of a sense of national identity. According to Trumpener, in Maturin's work the uncanny nature of Ireland's landscape in the early 1800s creates "the sense of the national landscape as a site simultaneously of historical plenitude and historical loss becomes a crucial commonplace, the primary touchstone of character, the ground of narrative perspective, and the central philosophical insight" (Trumpener 1997: 45). This combination of absence and inspiration, whereby the transformed colonial landscape of Ireland in the 1810s and 1820s harbors the authentic traces and memories of the past, illustrates the nostalgic literary attempt to reclaim and rebuild the now dislocated home/nation. In particular, Maturin considers the destruction and transformation of the landscape of Ireland through the ruin of the ancestral home. He locates his resistance at the very site of erasure, finding hope for his characters within the ruins of defeat. For example, the mad minstrel in Maturin's *The Albigenes* (1824) rebuilds past glories out of the ruins of the ancestral home by refusing to accept the present:

"The stones of that castle," he cried, pointing to it, – "the weeds that burst through its walls – the very waters of its moat – the rugged battlements of its walls, are dearer to me than all or aught but this" – and with enthusiastic expression he kissed his harp as he spoke. "With this," he cried wildly, "I can raise palaces of amethyst and rivers of silver, and flowers of hue and colour that shame paradise."

(Maturin 1974: 169)

Within this context, the bard can, seemingly, recover a lost past by looking for markers within each ancient location. However, as Maturin reveals in a number of his novels, the landscape that the bard brings to life is threatened by the force of England's colonial influence in Ireland. In *The Milesian Chief* (1812) this is confirmed through the intimacy between the bard and the ruined castle as an old Irish harper is "the very personification of a feudal past who finds his perfect equivalent in a ruined tower, the architectural emblem of a pre-British feudal culture" (Kosok 1996: 360). This association between the harper, the ruined tower and a pre-British feudal past accentuates both the cultural erosion taking place within the Irish landscape, and, at the same time, the location of the re-appropriation of a mythical Irish space from the ruins of colonial occupation. The resulting image of the Irish nation is a landscape scattered with the hollow signs of past glories, as ruins slowly erode away, devoid of the songs and stories to celebrate and maintain these edifices of heroic and mythical times. As Connal tells Armida in *The Milesian Chief*, the fundamental lack of fervor displayed by the Irish in the face of the visible signs of Ireland's destruction leaves a landscape without myths and without identity:

The nameless ruins . . . which are supposed to commemorate greatness now unknown, and virtues that have no other memorial; ruins amid which fancy sits down at leisure to dream of what its tenants might have been; such may suggest

an abstract and indefinite melancholy – a melancholy without passion, and without remembrance.

(Maturin 1979: 1.186)

Connal identifies what could be described as a rupture of the bond between place and being, as the mythical stories and histories that link the two are lost to the apathy of the Irish in the face of English colonial occupation. According to Connal's description, the Irish exhibit an inability effectively to locate and define their national experience, as their melancholy and nostalgia for past glories, embodied by the "nameless ruins," are left as unfulfilled and unexplored spaces (Maturin 1979: 1.186). Here Maturin utilizes the Gothic machinery of the ruined castle to create an uncanny absence at the core of the Irish national experience.

Anglo-Irish politics are also at the heart of Maturin's seminal Gothic novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). In providing a vehement critique of colonial endeavors and the effects of Europeanization, Maturin opens up an exotic Gothic geography that is global in its proportions. As Wein explains:

Engulfing national borders . . . Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) makes all places bow to its encompassing perspective. Insistently positioning the narrative in a specific place that is simultaneously no place and every place, the narrator recapitulates the powers of his eponymous anti-hero, like him transgressing barriers of time and space, moving through impermeable boundaries that melt under his penetrating gaze.

(Wein 2002: 226)

Maturin calls into question geographic and historical boundaries as the Wanderer transcends a series of borders. In so doing, Maturin provides "one of the fiercest attacks on colonialism anywhere to be found in nineteenth-century literature" (Kosok 1996: 228). Central to this attack is the relocation of Maturin's heroine, Immalee, as the Gothic geographies represented in the text impact upon the ontological composition of the colonized subject. Maturin complicates and problematizes Immalee's transition from an island life as "an innocent *bon sauvage*" to her native Catholic Spain as she embraces Christianity in the face of Melmoth's advances and is (re)named as Isidora (Demata 2002: 25). As a result, her re-christening and re-entry into the Catholic church of Spain act as a step toward the completion of a circle of events that ultimately leaves Isidora/Immalee imprisoned by the Inquisition after giving birth to Melmoth's child. Immalee's supposed salvation and return home leads her into the arms of Maturin's corrupt image of the Spanish Catholic Church and the rigid frameworks of Spanish/western society. According to Joseph Lew, "Immalee's *rite de passage*, her journey by sea to her new identity as Isidora, the wealthiest heiress of Madrid, should take her from islanded obscurity to social triumph. Instead, it moves her only into ever more confined areas" (Lew 1994: 184). This transition from the relative freedom of Immalee's island paradise to the strict confines of Spanish society exposes not only cultural assimilation, but also the power of location in defining a sense of identity.

Maturin's contribution to the development of a series of Gothic locales reinforces the sense that this emerging Gothic aesthetic was by the end of the 1820s concerned

with the legacy of colonization – internal and external – and the conflicted national and class geography of Britain post-Union. In particular, the uncanny locations that are represented in terms of alien customs or colonial assimilation serve to critique the impact of land reform within Britain following the Acts of Union in 1707 and 1800. In this way, the Gothic geographies that emerged during the period 1764–1830, while increasingly geographically removed, were also focused increasingly on the political geography of Britain and its haunted landscapes.

REFERENCES

- Cottam, D. (1985) *The Civilized Imagination: A Study of Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Sir Walter Scott*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Demata, M. (2002) “Discovering Eastern Horrors: Beckford, Maturin, and the discourse of travel literature,” in A. Smith and W. Hughes, (eds), *Empire and the Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hobsbawn, E. (1983) “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger, (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hogle, J. (1994) “The Ghost of the Counterfeit in the Genesis of the Gothic,” in A. Smith and V. Sage (eds) *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 23–33.
- Hoskins, W.G. (1955) *The Making of the English Landscape*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Kosok, H. (1996) “Charles Robert Maturin and Colonialism,” in M. Massoud (ed.) *Literary Inter-Relations: Ireland, Egypt, and the Far East*, Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 228–34.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991) *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lew, J. (1994) “‘Unprepared for Sudden Transformations’: Identity and Politics in *Melmoth the Wanderer*,” *Studies in the Novel: Special Number The Romantic Novel*, 26 (2), 173–95.
- Maturin, C.R. (1974) *The Albigenses*, 1824, New York: Arno Press.
- (1979) *The Milesian Chief*, 1812, New York and London: Garland Publishing.
- (2000) *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 1820, ed. V. Sage, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Miles, R. (1995) *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (2000) “Introduction,” in R. Miles (ed.) *The Italian*, London: Penguin.
- Moers, E. (1985), *Literary Women*, 1976, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Radcliffe, A. (1980) *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2000) *The Italian, or The Confessional of the Black Penitents*, 1797, ed. R. Miles, London: Penguin.
- Repton, H. (1816) *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, London.
- Schmitt, C. (1997) *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Trumpener, K. (1997) *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Wall, C. (2004) “A Geography of Georgian Narrative Space,” in M. Ogborn and C.W.J. Withers (eds) *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 114–29.

- Walpole, H. (1996) *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, eds W.S. Lewis and E.J. Clery, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2011) *Hieroglyphic Tales*, 1785, London: Pallas Athene.
- Wein, T. (2002) *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel 1764–1824*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wordsworth, W. (1822) *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England*, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown.

FURTHER READING

- Brabon, B.A. (2013) *Gothic Cartography: A Literary Geography of Haunting*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. (The first sustained account of the relationship between the mapping of Britain and the rise of the Gothic novel in the eighteenth century, arguing that Gothic fiction from this period narrates the trauma of cartographic change.)
- Mighall, R. (1999) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Pairs Gothic and mapping within a nineteenth-century context. Mighall's maps are metaphorical and focused primarily on urban spaces.)
- Schmitt, C. (1997) *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (This seminal account examines the links between Gothic fictions and English national identity during the nineteenth century. Schmitt argues that Gothic is a dangerous tool for nation building because it exposes the constructed nature of the modern nation. Within this context, Schmitt opposes science and Gothic.)
- Wall, C. (2004) "A Geography of Georgian Narrative Space," in M. Ogborn and C.W. J. Withers (eds) *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 114–29. (This is an insightful essay that focuses on Radcliffe's use of landscape in her Gothic romances. In particular, it explores the politics of Radcliffe's panoramic landscapes.)

CHAPTER TEN

GOTHIC AND THE VICTORIAN HOME



Tamara Wagner

Victorian ideologies of domesticity establish the home as “the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division,” as John Ruskin famously phrased it in *Sesame and Lilies* (1865):

In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in.

(Ruskin 1908: 122)

In the fiction of the time, this homely refuge is often made desirable precisely through its absence. As Peter Ackroyd has said of the stark juxtaposition of nostalgically illuminated fireside coziness and the miseries surrounding it in Charles Dickens’s Christmas stories, “Beyond the hearth were the poor, the ignorant, the diseased, the wretched; and do we not enjoy the flames of the Christmas fire more because of the very shadows which it casts?” (Ackroyd 1990: 414). The contrast accentuates the need for ideal homes. When the domestic realm itself figures as a site of terror, however, domestic ideology is undercut. Misery, unhappiness and crime not only pervade households, they arise from within them. Throughout the nineteenth century, such extensions of Gothic paradigms facilitated a new negotiation of the home as an ideal, of domestic fiction as the main purveyor or form of expression of this ideal, and ultimately also of the Gothic’s adaptability.

In Victorian Britain the Gothic lent itself as a means of exploring new challenges and threats: to articulate anxieties about modernity – new technologies, the results of rampant industrialization – and to new awareness of mental illness, crime and the anonymity of expanding urban spaces. Depicting a Gothic home offered a strategy either to reaffirm or to puncture the idea of a domestic shelter from all these threats. Clearly, this idea itself was ambivalent. Over the century, domestic Gothic was deployed for diametrically opposed agendas, and often in reactions to readerly expectations. Although it is always problematic to slot literary developments into neat

categories, three models of the Gothic “at home” in Victorian fiction are helpful for a critical appraisal: (1) the Gothic of what Ruskin terms “that outer world,” a Gothic that helps to establish the home as a shelter by force of contrast, and which is arguably the most straightforward function that Gothic paradigms have in relationship to the Victorian home; (2) a domestic Gothic that not only pervades, but may even originate within the outwardly placid home; and (3) a parodied or mock-Gothic that self-reflexively plays with established paradigms, often while the narrative as a whole harnesses Gothic terror within a homely setting nonetheless. These categories are informed by literary trends and, in the case of the mock-Gothic in particular, by reactions and counter-reactions to influential works or trends. This chapter draws on a selection of nineteenth-century texts to provide an overview of the various uses of the Gothic in representations of the Victorian home. The three categories are by no means all-encompassing, and this is why I shall begin with a discussion of how the Gothic of the Victorian home changed over the century: how it reflected and inflected literary developments while remaining centrally concerned with the home.

The critical concentration on domesticity has chiefly been accountable for the long persisting belief that the Gothic somehow “went away” in the nineteenth century. There was the traditional Gothic of Ann Radcliffe and Horace Walpole and, on the other end of the timeline, the late-Victorian “return” or “revival” of the Gothic with such authors as Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (both 1847) were eccentric exceptions, or, like J. Sheridan Le Fanu’s vampire tale “Carmilla” (1872), precursors of later experiments. They stood out in literary history, complicating the traditional association of High-Victorian fiction with Realism. Meanwhile, ongoing recovery projects of nineteenth-century popular culture have shown that even if “the Gothic novel was less apparent after the 1820s, it did not disappear” (Kitson 2002: 165). This recognition has come hand-in-hand with the acknowledgement that the Gothic as a set of paradigms is more malleable and that one important way “to define Gothic is not to look in terms of the forms and content of the fictions, but rather to elucidate the effects these fictions have in raising the anxieties of its audience” (Kitson 2002: 165). For the Victorians, social and cultural anxieties largely centered around the home: its sanctity, or rather, the need for such a shelter at a time of unprecedented cultural, social and technological change. In “a fundamental reshaping of tradition,” the main sites of the Gothic consequently shifted “from the traditional remote rural setting to a contemporary urban setting” (Pritchard 1991: 435). In the majority of mid-Victorian narratives, although I shall return to important exceptions, the Gothic is located at home or close to home. It is no longer projected onto foreign places, or placed in the remote past, among aristocratic characters, as it is, say, in Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). On the contrary, Gothic horror emerges in familiar, mundane spaces, in contemporary or near-contemporary settings, and among members of the middle classes, the Victorian novel’s main target readership. This crucially reshaped the significance of the Gothic itself, while it could have, as I have indicated, a twofold impact on the representation of the Victorian home.

Gothic arguably became more pervasive and disturbing “because of its ability to manifest itself anywhere” (Wolfreys 2000: xiv). Henry James already remarked of Victorian sensation fiction that it concentrated on

those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries that are at our own doors . . . Instead of the terrors of Udolpho, we were treated to the terrors of the cheerful country house or the busy London lodgings. And there is no doubt that these were infinitely the more terrible.

(James 1870: 4)

Renewed interest in nineteenth-century sensational writing has acted as an important catalyst in the discussion of the Victorians' self-consciously eerie domestication of Gothic paradigms – so much so, in fact, that the “domestic Gothic” has come to be associated first and foremost with the mid-Victorian sensation genre. This is in itself not surprising, since the craze for sensation that dominated the literary market in the 1860s and 1870s traded on a dread fascination with crime, insanity and social and sexual transgressions. Sensational narratives of the time highlight the effects that new outside pressures might have on domestic spaces, but more often they make the most of miseries that radiate out from the home. Lillian Nayder, in a study of Wilkie Collins, has thus influentially defined “domestic Gothic” as the exposure of “the private sphere as a place of Gothic strife rather than a healthy and harmonious refuge from the conflicts of public life” (Nayder 1997: 72). It is indeed primarily in sensation novels that the second model of the Victorian Gothic at home can be found: seemingly well-ordered, respectable homes are shown to be harboring, if not actively producing crime. Their exposure eschews the underpinning ideal of the home as a refuge, although the majority of Victorian sensation novels present a problematically ambiguous rather than a straightforwardly transgressive view of the home or society.

With its interest in unexpected occurrences and startling incidents that take place in mundane surroundings, the sensation genre indisputably gave an important impetus to the depiction of Gothic homes. Several popular Victorian authors, including Dickens, capitalized on this literary craze in their later fiction. Since they often reacted critically to clichéd formats, the use of Gothic paradigms remained an intensely self-conscious project during the century's second half. Gothic, indeed, has been understood as “the preceding literary sensationalism,” a literary reference point to which sensation fiction “recurrently alludes” (Rance 1991: 53). The connection, however, is by no means one-way or even strictly chronological. On the one hand, the pervading trend to view domesticity's ambiguous portrayal through the lens of the sensation craze may have been vital in directing attention to the Victorian home as a Gothic site. On the other hand, this has obscured the different narrative functions that Gothic homes may have: the recuperation and reconstruction of Gothic spaces in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852–53), for example, or the simultaneous presence of thematically significant uncanniness and mock-Gothic in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853). Instead, the study of domestic Gothic demands a thematic approach that leaves strict chronology behind. Drawing on several texts that exemplify its different aspects, I re-examine Dickens's *Bleak House* and, more particularly, *The Hallowed Man* (1848), a ghost story that dramatizes the happy home's importance. In a short analysis of Wilkie Collins's *The Evil Genius* (1886), I then sketch the main characteristics of sensation fiction's Gothic homes before discussing the different functions of Gothic forms, including that of mock-Gothic, in Brontë's *Villette*.

“DELIGHTFULLY IRREGULAR”: GOTHIC DICKENS

Dickens utilized and remade a range of literary modes. His extensive oeuvre is a good reminder that seemingly neat categorizations may offer helpful signposts in literary history, but that they are neither definitive nor exclusive. Gothic elements recur throughout his fiction. Their changing relationship to domesticity shows how different the functions of Gothic homes can be, even within the work of one author. While Dickens's late “dark” novels – novels of the 1860s, including *Great Expectations* (1860–61), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65) and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (left unfinished in 1870) – contain sensational paradigms in their depiction of murder, doubles and secrets, *Oliver Twist* (1837–38) already critically engages with the tradition of Newgate tales, those criminal biographies named after London's infamous prison. The novel has consequently been seen as an early exponent of the sensation phenomenon as well as an indicator of how “Dickens himself resisted the labels attached to his fiction” (Archibald 2006: 53). It also has to be remembered that the “sensation novels of Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon were called at the time the ‘Dickensian’ School” (Mighall 2008: 96). Dickens wrote and edited collections of ghost stories as well as detective tales, and Inspector Bucket, a minor character in *Bleak House*, is now commonly regarded as “the first significant detective in English literature” (Haining 1996: 7). Still, such professional inquiry agents as “mildewed, threadbare, shabby” Nadgett in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) primarily function as embodiments of the home's invasion and a new anonymity: “a race peculiar to the city; who are secrets as profound to one another, as they are to the rest of mankind” (Dickens 2009: 385–86). This Gothic of modern urban spaces is essential to what I have termed the domestic Gothic's first category.

The eponymous building of *Bleak House* is the site of a past suicide: “the brains seemed . . . to have been blown out of the house too; it was so shattered and ruined” (Dickens 1998: 109). But it becomes a home for three orphaned characters, who delight in its “pleasantly irregular” layout and old-fashioned furniture (Dickens 1998: 79). If its architecture is labyrinthine and parts of it resemble a Gothic castle, it is in pointed contrast to institutions for unwanted children and equally sterile respectable homes: “one of those delightfully irregular houses where you go up and down steps out of one room into another, . . . and where you find still older cottagerooms in unexpected places with lattice windows and green growth pressing through them” (Dickens 1998: 78). There is nothing bleak about this house until the pressures of a tortuous law case, significantly involving relatives of an extended family held together only by legal opposition, force their way in again. At the same time, the novel vividly depicts the darkness of Victorian London, where “perishing blind houses” stare blankly, “with their eyes stoned out,” at human misery (Dickens 1998: 109). This Dickensian anthropomorphism capitalizes on an urban Gothic that visualizes the destruction of the domestic ideal, making it part of an underpinning social criticism. Gothic figures thus “infiltrate and intensify scenes of domestic realism” (Garrett 2003: 141). Robert Mighall even contends that Dickens thereby helped create “Not just a Gothic *in* the modern city, but *of* it, evoking horror as an agent for awareness of the necessity of urban reform” so that he could be seen as “largely responsible for Gothicising our view of Victorian England, and specifically London” (Mighall 2008: 86, 94). This urban Gothic was to become a central feature of

sensation fiction as well. In pervading the home, it offers a stark, even hopeless view of the city and domesticity. For Dickens, however, Gothic devices also offer a counterpoise. Through a positive doubling at the end of the novel, a second Bleak House provides a domestic haven.

This pattern recurs in Dickens's fiction, and is particularly clear-cut in his Christmas stories. The first and best remembered of these novellas is *A Christmas Carol* (1843). It orchestrates a hard-hearted businessman's conversion through a supernatural time-travel narrative. Gothic horror and tear-jerking sentimentality reinforce each other. In an allegorical scene that illustrates Dickens's use of the Gothic to articulate social criticism, "Ignorance" and "Want" are personified as street children:

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked; and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

(Dickens 2003: 92)

A similar figure features in *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*, the fifth and last of Dickens's Christmas novellas. Simultaneously frightening and pitiful, and "more like a young wild beast than a young child" (Dickens 2003: 141), it embodies social neglect and, in all its ignorance and want, serves as the double of a professor who has renounced all "the intertwined chain of feelings and associations, each in its turn dependent on, and nourished by, the banished recollections" (Dickens 2003: 148). The "bargain" that Professor Redlaw strikes with a "Phantom," a demonic apparition, "Ghastly and cold," and "an awful likeness to himself" (Dickens 2003: 142), is that he will forget his painful past without losing any "knowledge" or "result of study" (Dickens 2003: 148). Flattering himself that he will benefit mankind by helping them to rid themselves of "their sorrows and their wrongs" (147), he quickly realizes that he carries a curse and that he can only safely consort with a street urchin who has no fond associations to lose. His ghostly transformation is accompanied by this child's "shrill cry" and "a strangeness and terror upon him, as if he too were lost" (Dickens 2003: 149).

Redlaw spreads dissatisfaction where there was contentment, cutting off the miserable from the recollection of anything better and, through this, from the possibility of redemption. A poor but fondly attached family does not remember anymore what makes them put up with each other; a deathbed reunion scene is interrupted as the professor's presence infuses the repenting prodigal with renewed cynicism; a lonely student, nursed back to health by Milly, a homely saint-like figure, expresses only suspicious ingratitude. Redlaw's sense of being an outcast becomes literalized: "I am infected! I am infectious! I am charged with poison for my own mind, and the minds of all mankind" (Dickens 2003: 182). An imagery of infection combines with Gothic doubling, showing how Dickens harnesses traditional tropes and boosts

them with contemporary anxieties. There is an anodyne, however, in the “spirit of all goodness, affection, gentle consideration, love, and domesticity” (Dickens 2003: 214) embodied by Milly. Her presence undoes the curse that Redlaw brings. The tale’s sentimental moral is both about “the air of home, and that’s the purest and the best there is” and about the importance of nostalgic memory: that it is possible to be “Merry and happy – and remember well” (Dickens 2003: 213, 136).

GOTHICIZING THE HOME: VICTORIAN DOMESTIC GOTHIC

The Haunted Man illustrates the first, most straightforward use of Gothic homes, showing how any space can become Gothic, but be redeemed by the spirit of domesticity. Sensation fiction might capitalize on the same narrative trajectory, but more often, it locates the origins of the Gothic within the home. Domestic problems create their own terrors. There are both proverbial and real skeletons in the most homely cupboards, and intruders often act as catalysts. Showcasing sensation fiction’s continued influence and how the Victorian home’s sensationalization was by no means confined to 1860s tales of detection, Collins’s *The Evil Genius* exposes various kinds of dysfunctional families, attacks divorce and custody laws of the time, and treats transgressing characters with an ambiguous sympathy that is characteristic of the genre. Who the presiding evil spirit or “genius” really is remains unclear, although the term is most often applied, in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, to a pompous mother-in-law. Even she means well. As there are plenty of weak characters, but no wicked villains, domestic psycho-terror is exacted almost inadvertently. Neglected and abandoned as a child, Sydney Westerfield is hired by Herbert Linley as his daughter’s governess. Pity and gratitude lead to an adulterous affair; custody battles over the Linleys’ young daughter ensue. The happy ending seems rather patched-up, as the divorced parents remarry and Sydney finds more genuine fatherly protection elsewhere, but in contrast to this fairy-tale resolution, the novel’s domestic Gothic is strikingly mundane. Employing no violent crime, no bloodshed and no false identities, it is Gothic at its most domesticated, and the home itself intrinsically the most Gothic. But while *The Evil Genius* illustrates literary sensationalism’s role in foregrounding, if not instigating, domestic Gothic, it also builds on the adulterous/bigamous governess plot most influentially developed in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and the custody issues already treated in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848).

Any one of the Brontë sisters’ novels might lend itself to a discussion of mid-nineteenth-century Gothic. However, like Elizabeth Gaskell’s Gothic tales, including “The Old Nurse’s Story” (published anonymously in the 1852 Christmas issue of Dickens’s *Household Words*) and Gaskell’s “Lois the Witch” (1859), Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* differs from the majority of Victorian Gothic fiction by being primarily set in a previous century. By contrast, Anne Brontë’s *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* has primarily been read in the context of nineteenth-century divorce and custody laws (Berry 1996; Wagner, 2007). Both novels, moreover, utilize the traditional Gothic trappings of half-empty ancient mansions to articulate feminist concerns about domestic confinement. The Gothic themes of incarceration, abduction and psycho-terror thus become eerily legalized when the eponymous tenant of

Wildfell Hall turns out to have fled her abusive, alcoholic husband in order to hide their five-year-old son. Legally, the child is his father's property, and the mother is guilty of abduction. The heroine lives in fear of a counter-abduction; her home is a secret hideaway pervaded by terror and foreboding. The legal and conventional arrangements of marriage are exposed as potentially Gothic, while domesticity, especially motherhood, is embraced. Later sensation novels frequently exhibit a similar ambiguity.

Jane Eyre has similarly been classified as an ambivalently proto-feminist text. Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester's first wife, possibly a Creole, a madwoman and Jane Eyre's double, is locked up in the attic of a lonely mansion. Her maniac laughter haunts the house, swelling up whenever Jane feels particularly restless, confined and isolated. Through *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Gilbert and Gubar 1979), a breakthrough feminist study by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Bertha has come to epitomize the recurrent motif of confining domesticity as well as larger questions of female authorship. In the wake of Jean Rhys's 1966 *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a prequel set in 1830s Jamaica, *Jane Eyre* has also been read through a postcolonial lens. It is thereby often overlooked that Bertha is likened to "the foul German spectre – the Vampyre [*sic*]" (Brontë 1971: 250). This creates a link between traditional Gothic tales of the supernatural and Stoker's late-Victorian *Dracula* (1897), showing that nineteenth-century Gothic was, despite its divergent variants, a continuous phenomenon. When the first Mrs Rochester sucks blood, her characterization as insane (and foreign) seems to explain away the "spectre," yet the threatening bigamy plot is simultaneously imbued with a sense of the supernatural. Most nineteenth-century rewritings concentrated on adultery/bigamy, or combined "the motif of the 'deserted wing' housing an imprisoned spouse, with an account of the fortunes of a governess" (Lecaros 2003: 41). In "the authentic sensation novel," moreover, "Jane no longer runs away from the would-be bigamist; she is much more likely to dabble in a little bigamy of her own" (Hughes 1980: 9). Collins's *The Evil Genius* is an illustrative example, as the governess commits adultery, and while domestic order is ultimately re-established, this defies social conventions even more.

Brontë herself recurred to her Gothic treatment of entrapment and isolation in *Villette* (1853). The novel was based on her own experience in Belgium, where she taught English and learned French in a boarding school run by M. and Mme Héger in 1842 and 1843–44. Lucy Snowe is a young English teacher in the fictitious town of Villette (Brussels). Her intense loneliness when she spends the vacation alone at the school is based on Brontë's homesickness during a similar period, and M. Paul Emmanuel, the French teacher to whom Lucy ultimately becomes engaged, on M. Héger. The psychological terror of isolation is expressed through Gothic paradigms and vocabulary, at times tongue-in-cheek, but without losing their effect. An orphan, with no connections and no employment in England, Lucy experiences "Unutterable loathing of a desolate existence past," so that her "position rose on [her] like a ghost" (Brontë 2004: 55, 52). Arriving overseas without knowing a word of French, she gets lost in a labyrinthine ancient city that maps out her state of mind. This phantasmagoric wandering is repeated when isolation during the school's vacation climaxes in a feverish nightmare that drives her into the streets and into a Roman Catholic Church. That the Protestant Lucy is desperate enough to attempt

the Catholic rite of confession in order to get some relief evinces how nineteenth-century Gothic remains invested in anti-Catholicism (Peschier 2005). The priest is kind, intelligent and caring, but suggests that Lucy should become a Catholic and possibly a nun. Simultaneously, the novel reworks a scene in *Jane Eyre*: Jane, like Lucy, collapses to recover in the presence of long-lost friends or unknown relatives. For Lucy, however, there is no easily attainable domestic refuge from Gothic terror.

Tightly plotted parallelisms create a haunting effect throughout the novel. In the opening chapters, Lucy describes visits to her godmother, Mrs Bretton, detailing a stolid domestic quietude that seems to be connected to her later experience only by force of contrast. Yet as all the characters reappear again, unexpectedly and under different names, Lucy's restoration to an expatriated English home is uncanny. Having collapsed in the streets, she awakes surrounded by eerily familiar furniture: "the phantoms of chairs, and the wraiths of looking glasses, tea urns, and tea cups" (Brontë 2004: 199). Gothic effects render the mundane and seemingly homely utterly alarming:

Reader, I felt alarmed! . . . These articles could not be real, solid arm-chairs, looking-glasses, and wash-stands – they must be the ghosts of such articles; or, if this were denied as too wild an hypothesis – and, confounded as I was, I did deny it – there remained but to conclude that I had myself passed into an abnormal state of mind.

(Brontë 2004: 189)

Instead of providing the comforts of a restored home, the relocation is unnerving. Lucy's mirror-image is as spectral as surroundings that "grow familiar" and thereby only more unhomely:

I should have understood what we call a ghost, as well as I did the commonest object; which is another way of intimating that all my eye rested on struck it as spectral. . . . In this mirror I saw myself. . . . I looked spectral . . . [The armchair] appeared to grow familiar. . . . Strange to say, old acquaintance were all about me.

(Brontë 2004: 185–86)

There is a natural explanation: Mrs Bretton and her grown-up son have likewise moved to Villette. The spectral effect is nonetheless expressive of Lucy's unsettledness.

Mock-Gothic works on multiple levels. A "vague tale" is told of "a black and white nun": a "legend . . . unconfirmed and unaccredited" that "something had happened on this site [the school] which, rousing fear and inflicting horror, had left to the place the inheritance of a ghost story" (Brontë 2004: 117). Lucy terms this "romantic rubbish" (Brontë 2004: 118), yet she herself is said to "haunt" the place. When the doll-like Count de Hamal throws a love letter to a schoolgirl across the school-wall, he describes the path underneath as "haunted by that dragon, the English teacher" (Brontë 2004: 123). Lucy picks up the missive and sees herself likened to a nun: "une religieuse" (Brontë 2004: 123). Subsequently she encounters the nun's apparition in the attic while feverishly poring over a rather dull, but eagerly

awaited letter from Mrs Bretton's son. This madwoman in the attic self-consciously mocks her single-minded, monomaniacal obsession when the letter seems temporarily lost: " 'Oh! they have taken my letter!' cried the grovelling, groping, monomaniac" (Brontë 2004: 274). The ghost ultimately turns out to be de Hamal in disguise, but this does not lessen the Gothic effect. In a symbolically charged scene, Lucy attacks the nun that seems to have taken over her bed to find only the nun's habit. But while the apparition is explained away as a practical joke that masks an elopement, the fake nun in the empty bed nonetheless signposts Lucy's continued loneliness. The novel's famous open ending completes its self-reflexive redeployment of Gothic forms. Lucy and M. Paul plan to marry and set up a school together, but he leaves to secure a fortune in the colonies and, it is strongly suggested, might die in a shipwreck on the way back. An unreliable first-person narrator, Lucy "leave[s] sunny imaginations hope. . . . Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life" (Brontë 2004: 274). The unresolved open-endedness accentuates a pervading unsettledness.

Far from disappearing, the Gothic at the mid-nineteenth century not only manifested itself everywhere, but also self-consciously participated in genre experiments and played with readerly expectations. When infiltrating the Victorian home, it might promulgate domestic values, but always by redefining these values, and frequently by criticizing social and legal conventions. The sensation genre perhaps most crassly unearthed skeletons from domestic cupboards, but it already built on the domestic Gothic developed by Dickens and the Brontës. Wilkie Collins's late sensation novel *The Evil Genius*, moreover, showcases how sensational formulae could be harnessed for a social criticism that was already articulated in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and how the later novel's ending might be more conservative if no less controversial. Brontë's heroine is ultimately freed from her abusive husband – admittedly, after she dutifully attends his deathbed – but the remarriage in Collins's novel exposes constraints imposed by new social expectations. The representation of Gothic homes became increasingly aware of changing literary and social paradigms, although the complex use of mock-Gothic in *Villette* already shows that self-reflexivity and self-irony were central to the Gothic at the mid-century too.

REFERENCES

- Ackroyd, P. (1990) *Dickens*, London: Sinclair-Stevenson.
- Archibald, D. (2006) " 'Of All the Horrors . . . The Foulest and Most Cruel': Sensation and Dickens's *Oliver Twist*," in K. Harrison and R. Fantina (eds) *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 53–63.
- Berry, L.C. (1996) "Acts of Custody and Incarceration in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 30.1: 32–55.
- Brontë, C. (1971) *Jane Eyre*, 1847, New York: Norton.
- (2004) *Villette*, 1853, London: Penguin.
- Collins, W. (1886) *The Evil Genius*, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Dickens, C. (1998) *Bleak House*, 1853, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2003) *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings*, London, Penguin.
- (2009) *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1844, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garrett, P.K. (2003) *Gothic Reflections: Narrative Force in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Gilbert, S.M., and Gubar, S. (1979) *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Haining, P. (1996) "Introduction," in P. Haining (ed.) *Hunted Down: The Detective Stories of Charles Dickens*, London: Peter Owen, 7–21.
- Hughes, W. (1980) *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- James, H. (1870) "Miss Braddon's Novels," *Dublin University Magazine*, 75: 448.
- Kitson, P. J. (2002) "The Victorian Gothic," in W. Baker and K. Womack (eds) *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 163–76.
- Lecaros, C.W. (2003) "The Victorian Heroine Goes A-Governessing," in B. Ayres (ed.) *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 27–56.
- Mighall, R. (2008) "Dickens and the Gothic," in D. Paroissien (ed.) *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, Oxford: Blackwell, 81–96.
- Nayder, L. (1997) *Wilkie Collins*, London: Prentice Hall.
- Peschier, D. (2005) *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses: The Case of Charlotte Brontë*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pritchard, A. (1991) "The Urban Gothic of *Bleak House*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 45.4: 432–52.
- Rance, N. (1991) *Wilkie Collins and Other Sensation Novelists: Walking the Moral Hospital*, Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses.
- Ruskin, J. (1908) *Works*, London: George Allen.
- Smith, A. (2007) *Gothic Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Stoker, B. (1897) *Dracula*, London: Archibald Constable.
- Wagner, T. (2007) "Speculations on Inheritance and Anne Brontë's Legacy for the Victorian Custody Novel," *Women's Writing*, 14.1: 117–39.
- Wolfreys, J. (2000) "Preface: 'I could a tale unfold' or, The promise of Gothic," in R. Robbins and J. Wolfreys (eds) *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, xi–xx.

FURTHER READING

- Bleiler, E.F. (ed.) (1971) *Five Victorian Ghost Novels*, New York: Dover. (A collection of reprinted Victorian supernatural tales, written between 1846 and 1897, including Charlotte Riddell's *The Uninhabited House*, J.W. Meinhold's *The Amber Witch*, Amelia B. Edwards's *Monsieur Maurice*, Vernon Lee's *A Phantom Lover* and Charles Willing Beale's *The Ghost of Guir House*, with an introduction by E.F. Bleiler. This edited collection of rarely discussed material offers a good overview of the different versions and narrative functions of the supernatural in the second half of the nineteenth century.)
- Brontë, A. (2008) *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 1848, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Anne Brontë's second novel details a mother's escape from her abusive and drunken husband and her attempts to hide their young child from him since legally she commits child abduction in taking the son away from his father. Living alone and under a false name in the eponymous Wildfell Hall, she supports herself and her child through her paintings. An attack on nineteenth-century custody laws, the novel is also an intricately structured text that creates much of its Gothic effect through framestories, embedded tales and a juxtaposition of first-person narrator's points-of-view that expose prejudices based on superficial appearances.)

- Brontë, E. (1998) *Wuthering Heights*, 1847, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Emily Brontë's only novel is a multiply-framed tale of an ancient family's destruction over two generations. Its Gothic effects are generated both by the complex doubling of characters and by the creation of one of Victorian fiction's most enigmatic characters, the novel's villain, Heathcliff, a foundling of unknown origins who wreaks revenge among those who adopted but generally mistreated him.)
- Dickens, C. (2002) *The Haunted House*, 1862, London: Hesperus Press. (Written in 1862 as the annual Christmas issue of Dickens's periodical *All the Year Round*, this collection of supernatural tales includes contributions by Hesba Stretton, George Augustus Sala, Adelaide Anne Procter, Wilkie Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell, as well as an introduction and two further stories by Dickens himself.)
- (2005) *Mugby Junction*, 1866, London: Hesperus Press. (The first of the stories comprising this Christmas book, Dickens's "Barbox Brothers" was first published in the 1866 Christmas number of *All the Year Round*. Dickens then wrote another three stories, including a sequel, "Barbox Brothers and Co." Four more stories were contributed by Andrew Halliday, Charles Collins, Hesba Stretton and Amelia B. Edwards. Dickens's "The Signalman" is by far the most famous and has been adapted as a short film.)
- Gaskell, E. (2000) *Gothic Tales*. London: Penguin. (An accessible collection of the various supernatural and Gothic tales written by Elizabeth Gaskell, a well-known mid-Victorian author usually remembered first and foremost for her social-problem novels about industrial England. It includes "The Old Nurse's Story," "The Squire's Story," "The Poor Clare," "The Doom of the Griffiths," "Lois the Witch," "The Crooked Branch," "Curious, if True" and "The Grey Woman.")
- Houston, G.T. (2005) *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A scholarly analysis of nineteenth-century Gothic narratives in relation to the economic discourses of Victorian Britain that covers such late-Victorian classics as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as well as the Gothic imagery and undercurrents in mid-century novels like Dickens's *Little Dorrit*.)
- Le Fanu, J.S. (1872) *In A Glass Darkly*, 1947, London: John Lehmann. (A collection of short stories and novellas by J. Sheridan Le Fanu that invoke the supernatural, while detailing frightening states of mind. The most famous are "Green Tea," in which it remains unclear whether the main protagonist is haunted or suffers from hallucinations induced by too much green tea, and the vampire story "Carmilla.")
- Wolfreys, J. (2002) *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*, Basingstoke: Palgrave. (An exploration of spectrality and haunting in nineteenth-century literature, this monograph provides insightful analyses of Victorian ghost stories, but goes beyond a focus on the supernatural to discuss different forms of what the author terms "textual haunting." Individual chapters concentrate on Dickens's "comic-Gothic," with a focus on *The Pickwick Papers* and, later, *Little Dorrit*, Tennyson's poetic elegy *In Memoriam*, George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AMERICAN GOTHIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT, 1800–PRESENT



Matthew Wynn Sivils

The change of myth involves a profound change of meaning. In the American gothic, that is to say, the heathen, unredeemed wilderness and not the decaying monuments of a dying class, nature and not society becomes the symbol of evil.

Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1989: 160)

American Gothic writers have, since the first years of the New Republic, scrutinized the apprehensions that emerge from a nation defined by the very land it fears. Indeed, America's environmental unease serves as rich fodder for the Gothic, which so often works to interrogate the anxieties that spring from abusive conventions and repressed transgressions. In calling attention to the growing critical interest in the environmental Gothic, Tom J. Hillard writes, "Because Gothic literature is so obsessed with fears of all types, the Gothic provides a useful lens for understanding the ways that many authors – regardless of when they are writing – represented fears and anxieties about the natural world" (Hillard 2009: 689). In this essay I trace this environmental tradition within the larger American Gothic canon, with the goal of creating a greater appreciation for how the environment has haunted America's cultural imagination.

Leslie Fiedler, in one of the first studies of American Gothic, writes, "From the beginnings of our literature, the question has been posed: Is the 'natural' a source of spontaneous goodness, instinctive nobility, untutored piety? Or is it the breeding ground of a black, demonic, destructive force hostile to our salvation?" (Fiedler 1989: 196). As Fiedler suggests, one of the central problems in the development of a distinctive United States literary culture has been that of reconciling the nation's ever-shifting moral framework with its decidedly amoral, but crucially *American*, natural world. This problem of whether the environment that forms so much of the nation's self-perception is at its base "a source of spontaneous goodness" or something more insidious has contributed to the nation's inconsistently moralistic environmental imagination. After all, the natural world has for centuries been alternately loved and feared, praised and condemned, preserved and destroyed.

Given these extremes, it seems fitting and appropriate to consider how the environment fares in the American Gothic, a literary mode that trades in extremes while also struggling to differentiate itself from its European origins.

In defining the American environmental Gothic it is helpful to consider how the meanings of its constituent parts, American Gothic and environmental literature, have shifted over the past several years. Originally, an American Gothic fiction was defined as a work of literature containing an established set of elements borrowed or modified from Europe, such as haunted castles, family secrets, lost manuscripts, spectral figures and uncanny doubles. However, relying solely upon these elements for classifying American Gothic texts risks ignoring their regional, psychological and environmental concerns. The current critical tendency is to shed the idea that American Gothic is even a genre, and instead classify it as a flexible literary mode. American Gothic, writes Charles Crow,

is now usually seen as a tradition of oppositional literature, presenting in disturbing, usually frightening ways, a skeptical, ambiguous view of human nature and of history. The Gothic exposes the repressed, what is hidden, unspoken, deliberately forgotten, in the lives of individuals and of cultures.

(Crow 2009: 2)

In tandem with this redefinition of the American Gothic there has been a push to reconsider the criteria used to designate a text as *environmental*. When environmental literary criticism, also called ecocriticism, was in the first stages of its 1990s resurgence, the tendency was to privilege as environmental more traditionally obvious works of nature-oriented literature, such as Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). Lawrence Buell in *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) suggested that for a text to be classified as environmental it had to demonstrate four main traits: "*The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device,*" "*The human interest is not understood to be the only interest,*" "*Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation,*" and lastly, "*Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text*" (Buell 1995: 7–8, emphasis in text). Buell's set of criteria was helpful in broadly defining that subset of texts that was overtly concerned with the natural world, but, as was the case with the older definition of American Gothic, these elements were limiting in that they could potentially exclude texts that did not conform to the ideal.

Most environmental literary critics have since widened their definitions, including Buell himself, who writes,

Once I thought it helpful to try to specify a subspecies of "environmental text," . . . Now, it seems to me more productive to think inclusively of environmentality as a property of any text – to maintain that all human artifacts bear such traces, and at several stages: in the composition, the embodiment, and the reception.

(Buell 2005: 25)

The inclusiveness of this revised definition is particularly instrumental when considering Gothic texts, because, unlike traditional environmental works, the Gothic so

often shuns the overt in favor of a more veiled approach to its themes, privileging the latent over the manifest. American environmental Gothic, then, stands at the nexus between these two rich literary modes. It need not, however, bear an equal distribution of elements, as some of the best works of American environmental Gothic are those that display a subtle, but pervasive, environmental unease.

“A HIDEOUS AND DESOLATE WILDERNESS”

For the Puritans, the dark wood that lay beyond the village lamps was no pleasure ground: it was a dangerous realm that posed an assortment of threats, both physical and spiritual. Their sermons and captivity narratives portrayed the wilderness as the abode of monsters: it was where hapless colonists went to die, or worse, to lose their souls. In *Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620–1647*, William Bradford sums up the colonial image of the North American environment when he calls the land that greeted the Pilgrims “a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild animals and wild men” (Bradford 1952: 62). The so-called “wild men,” the Native Americans, played a major role in one of the continent’s first literary genres, the Indian captivity narrative. In these gruesome tales (which straddle the line between fact and fiction) settlers are kidnapped by terrifying Native Americans and dragged into the dark forest to endure all manner of hardship, including animal attacks, disease, disorientation, foul weather, starvation, not to mention torture and death at the hands of their captors. Thus, well before the introduction of the Gothic, the American forest was already a realm of evil, needing only a writer of adequate vision to begin the process of crafting it into a new, American Gothic.

That writer was Charles Brockden Brown, who, in a remarkable burst of creative energy, wrote four fully developed American Gothic novels in just two years. In particular, it was Brown’s novel *Edgar Huntly* (1799) that so ingeniously tapped into the Gothic possibilities of the American wilderness. As the narrative opens, the character Edgar Huntly, stricken with grief and given to what he terms “midnight wanderings and reveries,” decides to revisit the scene of a murder. Walking from his fiancée’s house back to his family farm, Huntly detours through a “trackless and intricate” (Brown 1984: 9) stretch of Pennsylvania wilderness, where, as he describes it, he “climbed the steeps, crept through the brambles, leapt the rivulets and fences” (Brown 1984: 9) and soon arrived at a “craggy and obscure path” (Brown 1984: 9) that led to the moonlit outline of the “fatal Elm” (Brown 1984: 7), the imposing tree under which his friend, Waldegrave (whose name means “grave in the woods”) succumbed to an unknown assassin’s bullet. With the events of his friend’s death running through his mind, Huntly approaches the tree only to realize that he is not alone. In the darkness he spies the form of a man, inexplicably digging with a spade at the base of the “haunted elm” (Brown 1984: 14). The story that Brown unfolds from this point is a dizzying collage of fear and confusion, vengeance and loss. Most of all, it is a tale of both literal and figurative *bewilderment*. Just as Huntly suffers from a bewildered state of mind, so too does he find himself lost and fighting for his life in the dangerous wilds of early republic Pennsylvania. To survive, he must traverse chasms, crawl through the darkness of treacherous caverns and, when he is not fighting hostile Delaware Indians, counter the repeated attacks of seemingly demonic panthers.

While Brown's novel contains many of the traditional elements he found in the European Gothic tales of his day (especially those of Ann Radcliffe), he also, in his desire to fashion an American form of the Gothic, created a decidedly environmental work. *Edgar Huntly* inspired later writers who, after an interlude of almost two decades, took up the charge of continuing in the American Gothic direction, resulting in what soon became a much fuller realization of environmentally infused frontier Gothic. Washington Irving, for instance, with the success of his *Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819–20), showed American writers that there was a domestic market for American Gothic stories (even if his work owed much to German folktales). These stories, which included “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” emboldened others, making the 1820s a decade that saw the sprouting of American Gothic fiction and with it popular American literature in general. John Neal with books such as *Logan* (1822) and *Brother Jonathan* (1825), and James Fenimore Cooper, with more success in such enormously popular novels as *The Spy* (1821) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), set out to continue what Brown had begun. Unlike Neal, Cooper was no fan of Brown's work, and he wrote in his preface to *The Spy* that *Edgar Huntly* “contains an American, a savage, a wild cat, and a tomahawk, in a conjunction that never did, nor ever will occur” (Cooper 2002: 2). In his efforts to correct this perceived flaw, Cooper almost singlehandedly invented the American frontier romance, which, through its emphasis on intense violence in a hostile wilderness, formed a crucial link between the genre's origins in the Indian captivity narrative and its survival today in the modern-day western, as in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985) and the HBO series *Deadwood* (David Milch, 2004–6).

“NATURE IS A HAUNTED HOUSE”

As the century progressed, so too did the degradation of the American wilderness. One literary response to this taming of the land was the development of an increasingly sophisticated body of nature writing, especially by those figures known as the Transcendentalists (most notably Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau). Another response was the further incorporation of animals, plants and the landscape in general into American Gothic texts. It is tempting to view Transcendentalism and the American Gothic as conflicting literary movements. After all, Emerson's healing, uplifting, divine woods seem a far cry from the dark wildernesses found in the Gothic texts. Upon closer consideration, however, they might be said to share some important commonalities. For as much as they may seem to differ in their presentation of the wilderness, both the Transcendentalists and such Dark Romancers as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville promote the idea that mankind ultimately dictates the moral atmosphere of the natural world.

Where these movements differ, though, is in how they answer the question of whether this human melding with the environment is to be enjoyed or feared. Most works of nature writing invite us to see the natural world as a beneficent entity where mankind may seek answers to the mysteries of existence and find solace from an increasingly urbanized world. American Gothic, however, warns us to fear the non-human, to dread the vengeance of animals and the environment, and to dread the horrific fact that our bodies and minds are entwined with the land itself and will

eventually decompose back into it. We encounter these lessons in any number of American Gothic texts, including Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Circumstance" (1860) and the poetry of Emily Dickinson, who manages to incorporate at least two of these anxieties within her brief poem that begins, "I heard a fly buzz – when I died," and who once wrote, that "Nature is a haunted house – but Art – a house that tries to be haunted" (Dickinson 1986: 554).

Emerson, on the other hand, chose to view nature as a healer, as a place of comfort and self-realization. As he writes,

In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith.

(Emerson 2003: 38–39)

Charles Crow argues that, at the core, the differences between Emerson and the Dark Romancers reside in their respective concepts of evil: "Where Emerson considered evil merely, 'privative,' the absence of good, Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe, like all true Gothic writers, believed that evil was a real and active force in our lives" (Crow 2009: 37). The aphoristic masterworks of the Transcendentalists embody an attempt to reclaim the environment as a morally good entity.

In 1835, the year before the publication of Emerson's *Nature*, Hawthorne published his famous Gothic story, "Young Goodman Brown." Hawthorne's allegorical tale relates the spiritual tragedy that befalls the eponymous Puritan character after meeting with the Devil in the woods. Newly married to a woman appropriately named "Faith," Brown ignores her pleas to delay his foreboding nighttime appointment in the wilderness. He stubbornly refuses, and walks into the wilds beyond the village where he meets with the Devil who, after demonstrating his ability to impersonate Brown's loved ones and to transport himself and others across great distances, guides the young man to a spot in the forest where they see Brown's friends and family (including his dear Faith) wickedly engaged in a black mass. In this story the wilderness acts as a chaotic liminal zone between the earth and Hell, where villagers mingle with demons. As Crow suggests, some of the best examples of the differences between the American Gothic and Transcendentalism are found in contrasting the ways Emerson and Hawthorne viewed the idea of evil in the natural world, often embodied in the cultural potential of the American woods. "Emerson," writes Crow, "had attempted to break free of the past, and especially of the legacy of his Puritan ancestors," with the goal of "inverting the vision of the Puritans" (2009: 46).

For Emerson, in the natural world "we return to reason and faith," but quite the opposite is true in the case in Hawthorne's wildernesses. Time and again, Hawthorne's fiction promotes the idea that America's dark past results in a haunted landscape that exists beyond all reason. This gift for fashioning sophisticated Gothic environments is on full display in his 1832 "Roger Malvin's Burial," in which a guilt-stricken Reuben Bourne imagines that his father-in-law's unburied body is "calling to him, out of the wilderness" (Hawthorne 1987: 62). Eventually Bourne succumbs to the compulsion to return to the "tangled and gloomy forest," where he must redeem

himself through a terrible sacrifice near the very boulder (“not unlike a gigantic grave-stone” [Hawthorne 1987: 69]) where years before he vowed to return with help for the dying man. For Hawthorne the American forest is haunted by the specter of oppression and injustice: it is a soil drenched with the sins of past generations and immune to the comfort of reason.

“A BOUNDLESS WATERY KENTUCKY”

As Melville proved in works such as *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Benito Cereno* (1855), the maritime setting was every bit as ripe for the American environmental Gothic as were Hawthorne’s New England forests. In 1841, while working on the whaler the *Acushnet*, Melville visited the Galapagos Islands. As they did for Darwin, who visited them in 1835, the islands stoked Melville’s imagination. But where Darwin saw in them the key to the mystery of life, Melville saw only so many bastions of death. Drawing upon both published accounts of the islands and his own experiences there, Melville wrote “The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles” (1854), a series of ten prose treatments of the islands.

The opening lines of Melville’s first sketch set the maritime Gothic scene:

Take five-and-twenty heaps of cinders dumped here and there in an outside city lot; imagine some of them magnified into mountains, and the vacant lot the sea; and you will have a fit idea of the general aspect of the Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles. A group rather of extinct volcanoes than of isles; looking much as the world at large might, after a penal conflagration.

(Melville 1986: 69)

The association of the islands with the urban, industrial imagery of cinder heaps and vacant lots belies Melville’s connection between the alien environment of the islands and the type of wasted, urban setting well known to many of his readers. His Gothic lens colors his descriptions of the animals too, particularly of the Galapagos tortoises, which he finds especially foreboding. As he writes,

Mariners have long cherished a superstition, not more frightful than grotesque. They earnestly believe that all wicked sea-officers, more especially commodores and captains, are, at death (and, in some cases, before death) transformed into tortoises; thenceforth dwelling upon these hot aridities, sole solitary lords of Asphaltum.

(Melville 1986: 73)

The “spectre-tortoise” (Melville 1986: 75) is, in Melville’s imagination, a haunted animal, doomed to a life as tedious as it is long. In describing the Galapagos’ signature creatures, Melville also engages in another, more traditional, form of American Gothic substitution, the comparing of the animals and the islands with the types of structures found in European Gothic texts. In looking at three tortoises, he claims, “I no more saw three tortoises. They expanded – became transfigured. I seemed to see three Roman Coliseums in magnificent decay” (Melville 1986: 77). Elsewhere, the elevated formation known as Rock Rodondo approximates a “tower” that seems

the “sole survivor of some perished castle” (Melville 1986: 80) and boasts “eaves” like those of a “barn or abbey” filled with a myriad of sea birds shrieking in a “demoniac din” (Melville 1986: 82).

The task of describing this sublime island realm affords Melville an opportunity to toy with Gothic imagery, drawing without reservation from both the European and American traditions. For example, he writes that atop this rock one may look upon the Galapagos as if spying “the universe from Milton’s celestial battlements,” while also taking in a “boundless watery Kentucky” where “Daniel Boone would have dwelt content” (Melville 1986: 86). As Melville progresses from one sketch to another we encounter tales of pirates and castaways, of murder and of desperation. The desolate islands become haunted houses, and those who met their doom there become forever trapped in the stories passed from one sailor to the next. In the ending lines of the tenth sketch Melville writes, “It is but fit that, like those old monastic institutions of Europe, whose inmates go not out of their own walls to be inured, but are entombed there where they die, the Encantadas, too, should bury their own dead, even as the great general monastery of earth does hers” (Melville 1986: 136). This passage demonstrates Melville’s clever reversal of the American Gothic tendency to replace European Gothic structures with natural forms, resulting in imagery that enhances the bleak otherworldly character of the islands.

“THE MONSTROPOLOUS BEAST”

As Melville’s opening description of the Galapagos Islands as “heaps of cinders dumped . . . in an outside city lot” indicates, America became increasingly industrialized in the second half of the nineteenth century. What was once a nation of farmers became a patchwork of city and country. Nostalgia for the old ways set in, which helped create a vogue for Regionalist literature, and tales of country life were especially popular. One among many notable Regionalist writers was the African American author Charles Chesnutt, whose *Conjure Tales* often incorporated a dark, supernatural element. Published between 1887 and 1899, Chesnutt’s dialect stories recount the despair of life in Reconstruction-era North Carolina. In stories like “The Goophered Grapevine” (1887), “Po’ Sandy” (1888), and “The Gray Wolf’s Ha’nt” (1898) – collected in *The Conjure Woman* (1899) – Chesnutt creates an amalgam of Regionalist literature, subversive racial protest, and environmental Gothic. In some of Chesnutt’s tales, the characters (men and women already figuratively transformed into beasts through the curse of slavery) seek to free themselves by employing conjurers whose magic literally transforms them into trees or animals, often with tragic results.

Chesnutt’s tales, along with those of Kate Chopin and Ellen Glasgow, helped create a portrait of the American South as an inherently Gothic environment. While the nation’s greatest sins – slavery, Native American genocide and environmental degradation – had taken place for decades in every corner of the United States, it was in the South that these evils melded to create one of the nation’s most powerful and lasting of literary traditions, the Southern Gothic. The South seemed custom-made for the Gothic. Its dismal swamps harbored alligators and ghosts alike. Its land had been imprisoned by the plantation system, an engine of oppression that generated the white splendor of cotton (and other agricultural bounties) from the blood and sweat of legions of black slaves.

It made for an especially fertile soil for writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, who in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) presents us with the character Janie Woods who feels a literal kinship with the natural world, and whose travels through a lush and dangerous Florida afford her a view to the way human and natural oppression may combine into one. For example, while working with other African American laborers in the Everglades, Janie, her husband Tea Cake and others of their group refuse to heed warnings of an approaching hurricane. They ridicule the Seminoles, who, when asked why they are leaving the area *en masse*, simply say, “Going to high ground. Saw-grass bloom. Hurricane coming” (1990: 154). They likewise ignore the example of the area’s wild animals, which soon flee in the same direction. When the storm hits it unleashes a torrent of desolation that Janie likens to a “monstropolous beast” that “rushed on after his supposed-to-be conquerors” (1990: 161–62). In Hurston’s novel a vengeful land strikes at humanity regardless of race, while social class still has much to do with their chances of survival.

William Faulkner’s fiction likewise portrays a haunted, even cursed, Southern landscape that is simultaneously the witness, accomplice and victim of a criminally tragic past that refuses to remain buried. Novels such as *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), *The Wild Palms* (1939), and *Go Down, Moses* (1942) each contain a natural environment wronged by shortsighted land-use practices and tainted by the human injustice it has absorbed. In a sentiment that pervades much of Faulkner’s powerful brand of environmental Gothic, young Ike McCaslin, in *Go Down, Moses* says,

Think of all that has happened here, on this earth. All the blood hot and strong for living, pleasuring, that has soaked back into it. For grieving and suffering too, of course, but still getting something out of it for all that. . . . And the earth don’t want to just keep things, hoard them; it wants to use them again.

(Faulkner 1990: 179)

For Faulkner, the environment and its denizens become receptacles of the myriad anxieties that haunt the South and America in general. One of his most memorable characters is not even a person, but the legendary bear Old Ben in *Go Down, Moses*, who in his terrible spectral glory represents the fading of the old South as its traditions are destroyed for economic gain. Alone and lost during a hunting trip in the Mississippi woods, Ike sees the legendary Old Ben as one might view a ghost:

Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, fixed in the green and windless noon’s hot dappling . . . dimensionless against the dappled obscurity, looking at him. . . . Then it was gone. It didn’t walk into the woods. It faded, sank back into the wilderness without motion as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink into the dark depths of its pool and vanish.

(Faulkner 1990: 200–201)

That this almost mythical forest where Ike’s family and friends have hunted for generations will by the end of the story be sold to a lumber company highlights the manner in which Faulkner links environmental degradation with social decay through a form of generational displacement.

In the second half of the twentieth century, writers such as Truman Capote, Flannery O'Connor and James Dickey further developed and modified the environmental strain of Southern Gothic by continuing to link the portrayal of dysfunctional relationships, eccentric characters, racial oppression and the grotesque with the South's blood-stained environment. Dickey's novel *Deliverance* (1970) is a particularly powerful example of Southern environmental Gothic. His story of a kayaking trip gone horribly wrong reveals how questions of human and natural evil become linked in the Southern Gothic. With its grotesque figures, racial violence and lush Georgia setting, Dickey's book and John Boorman's 1972 film adaptation, have, for better or worse, become emblematic of the American South.

"A TREE ON MY BACK AND A HAINT IN MY HOUSE"

Cormac McCarthy and Toni Morrison stand as two of American environmental Gothic's most innovative writers of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Since the 1960s, McCarthy has published a string of influential novels, including *Outer Dark* (1968), *Blood Meridian* (1985) and *No Country For Old Men* (2005), with virtually all of them addressing the ways in which the environment influences, and is itself affected by, humanity's struggle with evil. This theme is especially pronounced in McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), which relates a post-apocalyptic world where life itself seems to have become extinct and where the few humans remaining must traverse a gray landscape of ash while avoiding roving bands of cannibals. Stark to the point of abstraction, the land of McCarthy's *The Road* becomes akin to a corpse and makes for a disturbing environmental cautionary tale.

Toni Morrison is also a master of penning dire stories of human oppression and suffering within an environment that seems more a character than a setting. In her critical work, *Playing in the Dark* (1992), she explores the role of African American oppression in the formation of American literary culture and places special emphasis upon the works of Poe and Melville, persuasively arguing that in their writing is the origin of a rich American literary tradition (1992: 32). The work of those mid-nineteenth-century Dark Romancers has certainly had an influence on Morrison's own fiction. Just as Hawthorne often cast his glance back to the injustices of the Puritan era to make a point about contemporary anxieties, so too does Morrison, especially in *Beloved* (1987) and *A Mercy* (2008), look to the racist horrors of the preceding centuries to remind us that those prejudices remain interwoven in the American consciousness.

In *Beloved*, Morrison transports us to 1873 Ohio where the former slave Sethe must suffer the angry, sadness-ridden ghost of the baby whom years before she chose to kill rather than see forced into the dreadfulness of slavery. Eventually, an almost corpse-like young woman emerges from a nearby river, calling herself Beloved, a name that matches the one word Sethe could afford to have carved on her dead baby's headstone. Sethe, whose back bears a tree-shaped mass of whip scars, takes stock of her post-slavery life and says, "I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house" (Morrison 2004: 18). From the tree-shaped scar on Sethe's back, to Paul D's tendency to call trees "Brother," to the watery materializing of Sethe's dead child as a grown woman, this novel, like so many of the key American Gothic texts, is intensely concerned with the ways that the land absorbs suffering only to release it to haunt the living.

CONCLUSION

The environmental Gothic remains popular, and represents, as it has since its invention, some of the most sophisticated and affecting works of American literature. Daniel Woodrell's *Winter's Bone* (2006), Karen Russell's *Swamplandia!* (2011) and Jesmyn Ward's National Book Award winning *Salvage the Bones* (2011) together represent the continuation of the environmentally-charged Gothic themes that figure so prominently in American literature, at least since the beginning of the nineteenth century. For if we strip away the updated evils and old fashioned tropes, the attempts to refine and remake the mode, we find that under those layers of cultural patina many of the works that make up the American Gothic are at their marrow decidedly environmental. Once transplanted to North America, Gothic literature evolved, shedding some conventions and adding others. It replaced the European elements not merely with regionally appropriate place-holders, but also with a tendency to incorporate facets of the Gothic across a variety of genres. As Allan Lloyd Smith argues, "American writers increasingly came to strike the Gothic note in macabre detailing rather than by invoking the genre *in toto*" (Lloyd Smith 2012: 171). It worked so well that the Gothic, or at least fragments of it, became nearly ubiquitous in American literature, spurring Leslie Fiedler famously to argue that "of all the fiction of the West, our own is most deeply influenced by the gothic, is almost essentially a gothic one" (Fiedler 1989: 142). The trend of incorporating the Gothic into the whole of the American cultural imagination allowed for a far more inclusive literary palate, one better suited to accommodating environmental anxieties unique to America. This confluence of the Gothic with the natural world, a coupling of one of America's most powerful literary modes with one of its most distinct subjects, resulted in a literature adept at exploiting a deep-seated fear of nature. Ultimately, the power of the American environmental Gothic resides in its genius for playing upon the terror that resides behind a curtain of pastoral beauty, forcing us to recognize the ecological horror buried, corpselike, in the landscape.

REFERENCES

- Bradford, W. (1952) *Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647, 1650*, ed. S.E. Morison, New York: Knopf.
- Brown, C.B. (1984) *Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, 1799, eds S. Krause and S.W. Reid, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- Buell, L. (1995) *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (2005) *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chesnutt, C. (1899) *The Conjure Woman*, New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cooper, J.F. (2002) *The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground*, 1821, eds J.P. Elliott, J.H. Pickering, L. Schachterle, and J. Walker, New York: AMS Press.
- Crow, C.L. (2009) *American Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Dickinson, E. (1986) E. Dickinson to T. W. Higginson, 1876, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. T.H. Johnson, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Emerson, R.W. (2003) *Nature and Selected Essays*, 1836, New York: Penguin.
- Faulkner, W. (1990) *Go Down, Moses*, 1942, New York: Random House.

- Fiedler, L.A. (1989) *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 1960, Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive.
- Hawthorne, N. (1987) *Selected Tales and Sketches*, New York: Penguin.
- Hillard, T.J. (2009) “‘Deep into that Darkness Peering’: An Essay on Gothic Nature,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 16.4: 685–95.
- Hurston, Z.N. (1990) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937, New York: Harper Collins.
- Lloyd Smith, A. (2012) “Nineteenth-Century American Gothic,” in D. Punter (ed.) *The New Companion to the Gothic*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 163–75.
- Melville, H. (1986) “The Encantadas, or The Enchanted Isles,” 1854, in *Billy Budd and Other Stories*, New York: Penguin.
- Morrison, T. (1992) *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (2004) *Beloved*, 1987, New York: Vintage.

FURTHER READING

- Bergland, R.L. (2000) *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*, Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College University Press. (A well-researched and highly readable study of the figure of the vanishing Native American in U.S. literary culture.)
- Goddu, T. (1997) *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*, New York: Columbia University Press. (A key text in the study of the development of American Gothic. Contains one of the best essays available on John Neal’s *Logan*.)
- Martin, R.K. and Savoy, E. (eds) (1998) *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. (An informative collection of essays on the American Gothic. Savoy’s essay is especially instructive.)
- Mogen, D., Sanders, S. P. and Karpinski, J. B. (eds) (1993) *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder and the Frontier in American Literature*, Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. (Excellent collection of essays on key texts of American Frontier Gothic.)
- Rozelle, L. (2006) *Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Oddworld*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. (An interesting study of the portrayal of environmental fear and the sublime.)
- Sedgwick, E.K. (1986) *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, New York: Methuen. (A theoretically sophisticated and thought-provoking analysis of the Gothic literary tradition.)
- Weinstock, J.A. (ed.) (2004) *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. (Good selection of essays on the Gothic tradition as related to national identity.)

CHAPTER TWELVE

GOTHIC CITIES AND SUBURBS, 1880–PRESENT

—♦—
Sara Wasson

While eighteenth-century Gothic saw darkness breed in remote forests, convents and castles, the nineteenth century saw the city become the privileged space for Gothic production. Industrialization and urbanization were the primary drivers for the Gothicization of city space, as urban centers were transformed by monstrous industry, economic exploitation and the isolation that Friedrich Engels describes as the “atomization” of the individual: people becoming adrift from communities and separated from any sense of human connection (Engels 2011: 48). By the 1880s, the labyrinthine streets of Europe had become a perfect platform for updating the themes of earlier Gothic, and in the 130 years since, cities and suburbs have remained rich sites for Gothic production.

A certain sense of spatiality has remained central to definitions of Gothic throughout each decade. A highly subjective literary mode, Gothic often hinges on representing the experience of a space as claustrophobic and imprisoning. Within these hideously constraining environments, Gothic texts depict threats from the past re-emerging; as David Punter notes, quoting Iain Banks, “A ‘soaked tribute of ancient poison’ may indeed be the best way of describing this perpetual sense of being haunted by the past . . . [a] sense not so much of failure as of the pointlessness of all striving” (Punter 1999: 113). Gothic sites are regularly threatened by a return of old horror or atavistic decline.

In this vein, a dominant theme of urban Gothic is the incorrigible fragility of modernity: even triumphs of the built environment are precarious, and the collapse of edifices is often a metaphor for the psychological crumbling of those who dwell within them. In urban Gothic, the triumphs of architecture and urban planning are fragile when faced with the destructive forces of entropy and human savagery: as Alexandra Warwick notes, the Gothic city “is also a place of ruins, paradoxically always new but always decaying, a state of death-in-life” (Warwick 2009: 251). Nature is always hungrily poised to usurp civilization.

In urban Gothic, cities can also be sites of “ancient poison” in a second way: these texts frequently depict the city as inviting its inhabitants to deteriorate to earlier states of physical and moral development. Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* (1892) argues that cities cause physical and psychological deterioration across an entire

race, and in 1885 an anonymous reviewer in the British medical journal *The Lancet* agreed that it is in the urban world that one finds “centres of decay in a nation . . . pressure, starvation, and atrophy . . . vice and of brutal reversion” (Anon. 1885: 264). The psychological deterioration of human agents is the source of much Gothic horror since the 1880s: supernatural threats are less terrifying than the possibility of human brutality stemming from evolutionary or psychological degeneration. As Fred Botting notes, the city “became a site of nocturnal corruption and violence, a locus of real horror” (Botting 1996: 11). This dread can also be identified in William Hope Hodgson’s horror fantasia *The Night Land* (1912), which imagines a dying sun and a world overrun by diabolic mutated creatures. Humans spend their whole lives huddled within defensive fortresses, and Kelly Hurley suggests that the novel can be read as a fantasy of a city “whose labyrinthine, disease-ridden, and fear-somely populated slum neighborhoods . . . threaten to overrun the places of safety” (Hurley 2001: 142).

A city or suburb’s terrors also come in a more subtle form: the uncanny, that sense of the familiar made strange. The uncanny can be defined as a crisis of narrative: being part of a story that you did not (consciously) choose, a story controlled by an unknown agency that may well be malevolent and is at the very least disturbingly opaque (Wasson 2010: 111). Sigmund Freud illustrates the experience of the uncanny with an urban anecdote. He recalls becoming lost in an Italian town and, despite his best efforts, repeatedly finding himself in the prostitutes’ quarter, his repressed desires shaping his trajectory against his conscious will (Freud 1985: 359). In city streets and suburbs, our own darkness is often there to meet us.

Freud tends to read the sensation of the uncanny as emerging from individual repressions. Yet the phenomenon of the uncanny is driven by more than individual neuroses and fixations. Some critics have made Freud’s theory a starting point for theorizing a social uncanny, in which the unnerving affect is a marker of alienations, marginalizations and cruelties afflicting a collective’s vulnerable members. Anthony Vidler, for instance, suggests that the uncanny has a “corresponding spatiality that touches all aspects of social life” (Vidler 1992: x), and Homi Bhabha describes uncanny moments as those in which private and public history merge: “The unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence” (Bhabha 1997: 445, 448). As this chapter will repeatedly show, the urban and suburban uncanny can be as much about social scars as individual psychic wounds.

While the aforementioned themes are characteristic of urban and suburban Gothic, it would be dangerous to generalize a single common “meaning” for either. It is tempting to describe the Gothic of the last 130 years in terms of the generalized emotional violence wrought by modernity, and to suggest that Gothic tropes signify a tormented subjective state typical of societies under late capitalism. This critical trend has been condemned for its lack of historical specificity (Warwick 2007: 10; Link 2004: 518; Luckhurst 2002: 528, 533; Punter 2001: ix); Roger Luckhurst has urged critics to pay special attention to the particularities of place in Gothic. The “critical language of spectral or haunted modernity that has become a cultural-critical shorthand,” he writes, “can only go so far in elaborating the contexts for . . . specific topography” (Luckhurst 2002: 528):

it is worth recalling that ghosts are held to haunt specific locales, are tied to what late Victorian psychical researchers rather splendidly termed “phantasmogenetic centres.” This might suggest that the ghosts of London are different from those of Paris, or those of California . . . ghosts . . . appear precisely as *symptoms*, points of rupture that insist their singular tale be told and their wrongs acknowledged.

(Luckhurst 2002: 541–42)

Cities are particular, and so are their terrors. In the next few sections I will illustrate this diversity by examining a non-comprehensive series of examples of urban and suburban Gothic since the 1880s. My discussion will focus on British and some American literary texts, though reference will also be made to film, graphic novels and gaming. Finally, it must be noted that although the affect of Gothic is often dark, anxious and distressed, the mode is not always driven by reflecting the anxieties of a period. As Catherine Spooner notes, the relationship between culture and society is more complex (Spooner 2010: x), and Gothic productions also facilitate pleasures. Indeed, sites of urban decay can serve as a stage for imagining anti-establishment freedom, subversion and creativity, and as this chapter will show, this latter trend increases as the twentieth century progresses (Wasson and Alder 2011: 14–15).

1880s–1940s

The cities of 1880s literature can be strikingly fragile. Richard Jefferies’s novel *After London* (1885) describes a post-apocalyptic world, in which civilization has been destroyed by some unknown cause and the wilderness has conquered the cities. London is “deserted and utterly extinct,” and the once-mighty metropolis is now a hotbed of poison and hideous ghosts (Jefferies 2005:128). H.G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The War in the Air* (1921) similarly represent cities crumbling, in this case due to Martian invasion and aerial warfare respectively: in both cases, epidemic and a collapse of civilization follow. In the former, social order crumbles alongside the built environment, “losing coherency . . . guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body” (Wells 2005a: 92). *War in the Air* describes cities around the world destroyed by aerial bombardment and the grotesquerie of modern war machinery, “a metal worker’s fantasy of frozen metal writhings” (Wells 2005b: 113). In 1939 Wells’s pessimistic nonfiction *The Fate of Homo Sapiens* predicted that “Mankind which began in a cave and behind a windbreak will end in the disease-soaked ruins of a slum” (Wells 1939: 311).

Yet the destruction of urban space can represent more than the fragility of civilization; it can represent other kinds of deterioration too. Urban Gothic is an aesthetic of decay, and at the end of the nineteenth century there was a profusion of discourses ready to spawn diverse narratives of degeneration, be they imperial, social or psychological. Gothic in the 1880s is influenced by multiple discourses, including Darwin’s theory of evolution (which made people newly sensitive to the possibility of degeneration as well as evolutionary progress), theories of mind from writers such as Freud (who articulated a theory of human mind as fraught with unconscious

desires), social transformations (including challenges to traditional gender roles posed by the “New Woman”), and imperial anxieties accompanying the slow decline of the British empire (Dryden 2003).

Wells regularly explores the notion of evolutionary degeneration. His novel *The Time Machine* (1895), for example, imagines the long-term evolutionary consequences of urban economic exploitation in which workers are condemned to dungeon-like factory environments. Other writers focus on more imminent declines, such as the fading of the British empire. Kathleen Spencer coined the term “urban Gothic” to describe the way in which late-Victorian authors set their Gothic fantasies in urban settings, and accompany them with the language of scientific empiricism (Spencer 1992: 200–201). Often central to these fantasies is the fear of racial degeneration and foreign invasion, in line with what Patrick Brantlinger has called the “imperial Gothic” (Brantlinger 1988: 227–28, 230–31). Here, the language of the occult is used to express imperial anxieties, particularly in the late Victorian and Edwardian era, and often these texts depict supernatural threats from the colonies coming “home” to the heart of Empire itself. Bram Stoker’s 1897 *Dracula*, for example, depicts a monstrous erstwhile ruler from Eastern Europe, planning to establish a new empire of his own in the decaying heart of the British capital. He purchases houses around London in which to store his coffins of homeland earth and uses these as bases from which to visit and transform women into vampiric brides. As Stoker’s Count warns his opponents, “Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine” (Stoker 1993: 394). Britain is menaced by sexualized vampiric contagion. Among other things, the tale is influenced by the fear of the dwindling of the British nation, as well as by anxieties concerning sexual infection, particularly through syphilis.

The imperial city also plays a vital framing role in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). The novel opens by London’s Thames river: “The air was dark . . . condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth” (Conrad 1995: 3). In this twilit heart of empire, the sailor Marlow recalls a harrowing journey to the Congo in which he encountered the “horror” to which humans can revert under certain circumstances. The fact that London is used as a frame implies that the darkness lies as much in London as without it: as Marlow puts it, “‘And this also . . . has been one of the dark places of the earth’” (Conrad 1995: 5). Such rhetoric is characteristic of a twist on imperial Gothic which William Hughes has called “Gothic Tourism,” in which protagonists enter the British or European wilderness or the poor areas of cities and find Gothic horror *there*. Unlike Imperial Gothic or Empire Gothic (Sage 1993), in which an alien horror from the colonies comes to the center of the empire, the Gothic tourist discovers that there is always already home-grown horror at the heart of empire, “a savage, atavistic past within which the self rapidly becomes implicated” (Hughes 2003: 123). Such Gothic tropes were by no means restricted to fiction: social commentary, as William Booth’s *In Darkest England* (1890) notably demonstrates, also abounded in images of urban degeneration.

In late-nineteenth-century literature, urban Gothic is not only a metaphor for economic exploitation, evolutionary decline or a twilight empire: it is also a metaphor for the psychological darkness of its inhabitants. Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is a famous example. This tale

of divided personality presents the city as both facilitator of depravity and symbol of degeneration: Hyde's unspecified pleasures are possible because of the vastness and anonymity of the metropolis, and the ensuing horrors find expression in urban Gothic. London becomes "like a district of some city in a nightmare" (Stevenson 2002: 23). There are dangers in reading urban Gothic in terms of psychological dualism, of a conscious versus unconscious "self" as discrete entities, since such an approach misunderstands the degree to which Freudian psychoanalysis presents the unconscious as being incorrigibly fragmented (Botting 1999: 18). Nonetheless, labyrinthine, crime-ridden *fin-de-siècle* cities are apt metaphors for tortured psychic states.

As the twentieth century progressed, the psychological symbolism of urban Gothic continued to be influential during the period known as literary modernism. While not "Gothic" in terms of a preoccupation with confinement and taboo, many texts of canonical modernism make selective use of Gothic conventions in representing the subjective experience of urban modernity. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), for example, make such selective use of a Gothic mode, while Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936) depicts Paris as a claustrophobic web in which the characters are haunted by their pasts. At key moments in these texts, a fearful or paranoid narrative voice combines with traditional Gothic tropes to convey the experience of disorientation, despair or aching isolation in the modern city. This trend intensifies during the Second World War, with British home-front literature developing its own twist on urban Gothic: nightmarish cities in which class division, xenophobia and alienation accompany the literal transformation of the city into a blacked-out site of fragile buildings and hallucinatory nocturnal visions (Wasson 2010).

GOTHIC PERIPHERIES: SUBURBS AND BORDERLAND ZONES

In suburban Gothic, city peripheries become sites of threat. While suburbs lack the seething, claustrophobic conditions that make industrialized cities such ripe settings for Gothic drama, they nonetheless hold ample opportunities for horror. Here, the confinement can be metaphoric: the space can be experienced as a site of oppressive normalization. Bernice Murphy defines suburban Gothic as "a sub-genre of the wider American Gothic tradition that often dramatizes anxieties arising from the mass suburbanization of the United States" in which "one is almost always in more danger from the people in the house next door, or one's own family, than from external threats" (Murphy 2009: 2). Murphy identifies a wide range of such anxieties as drivers for suburban Gothic, including economic uncertainty, environmental anxieties, fear of conformity and nostalgia for a pre-suburban way of life. However, there are some striking differences between tendencies in urban Gothic as I define it above, and this American suburban Gothic: while urban Gothic emphasizes the particular horrors of unique cities, suburban Gothic presents its settings as strikingly uniform, and indeed in that conformity lies much of the horror. And while urban Gothic is highly alert to threats from the past returning, suburban Gothic often represents its locations as disturbingly devoid of history rather than menaced by it (Murphy 2009: 10).

Of course, there are important exceptions to the latter, notably the clichéd trope of suburban dwelling built on haunted ground, particularly Native American sites. Jay Anson's *Amityville Horror* (1977) and Stuart Rosenberg's subsequent 1979 film adaptation, for example, imagine a suburban home terrorized due to, among other things, violating a Native American burial ground. Renée Bergland has demonstrated the resilience of this trope of the restless Native American dead throughout three centuries of American literature. Bergland argues that these spectral figures are not merely figures of resistance, complicating colonial national narratives; the imagery also elides the vibrant Native American cultures that have survived. The "[literary] ghosting of Indians is a technique of removal. By writing about Indians as ghosts, white writers effectively remove them from American lands" (Bergland 2000: 4). Postcolonial specters, then, both trouble national histories and assert the success of the colonial project.

A similar return of past violence can be found in South African representations of cities post-Apartheid. Though not in a fictional sense, Cape Town in 2003 witnessed the indigenous dead literally return when the developers of a luxury hotel uncovered over a thousand human bodies in the course of demolishing an office block. These bodies turned out to be those of a "slaaven begraffplaas" ("slave graveyard" in Colonial Dutch), a burying place for "slaves, free blacks, artisans, fishermen, sailors, maids" (Sheperd, quoted in Grunebaum 2007: 213). There was an outcry against the violation of this burial place. As Heidi Grunebaum notes:

For many who were forced from their lands . . . the bones were evidence of what they had suspected: the city was built over the graves of slave ancestors, and its continued construction represented an architecture of erasure, a concrete covering over of the material traces of memory.

(Grunebaum 2007: 213)

Efforts to resist the development failed, and the exhumed bodies were removed, yet other dead almost certainly remain to be discovered: "Their time, too, approaches" (Grunebaum 2007: 217). The "post" of postcolonial in no way implies that the legacies of colonial suffering have been resolved.

In another example of a complex, hybrid site, New Orleans is often hailed as one of the "quintessential Gothic cities" (Mighall 2007: 55). Its blurring of American, French and Caribbean cultural influences and its geographical idiosyncrasies, including the juxtaposition of city and ancient swamp, have long made it a ripe setting for Gothic fantasies, including representations of the return of a malevolent past. George Washington Cable's *Strange True Stories of Louisiana* (1888), for example, includes hideous images of shackled slaves concealed and revealed in houses, and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) opens in a slave plantation, in which young plantation owner Louis is singled out for vampirism by a European vampire eager for the financial benefits of the plantation riches. The vampires of Poppy Z. Brite's novel *Lost Souls* (1992) differ from Rice's in that they are fundamentally alien rather than transformed humans, but, like Rice, Brite uses New Orleans's status as hybrid Gothic zone to inform her vampire fantasy.

URBAN DECAY, VIRTUAL CITIES AND LATE CAPITALISM

The first line of William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* perfectly captures the pre-occupations of cyberpunk: "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" (Gibson 1984: 1). Cyberpunk, a strand of science fiction that came to prominence in the 1980s, is typically preoccupied with urban decay, transnational flows of money and information and the blending of real and virtual (with preference for the latter). Cyberpunk texts typically feature two kinds of city: a dystopian late capitalist metropolis and a virtual space of glittering promise rendered as a phantasmic urban zone. While the virtual realm is typically presented as a sublime site of material transcendence and freedom, the decayed material city also offers satisfactions: cyberpunk outlaw figures can weave subversive paths within the chaotic space (Moody 2011: 168, 178–86).

The two characteristic cities of cyberpunk are related, for the virtual is arguably predicated on urban ruin: "Ruined cities become a metaphor for the disintegration of the body as well as a way of valuing cyberspace" (Sponsler 1993: 263). However, there is an ethical dimension to this transformation. To read cyberpunk against its own narrative grain, its decayed urban zones mark the cost of such technological ambition: the effect it has on human industry, the marginalization of workers outside the techno-elite, and the way that transnational capitalism colonizes virtual spheres as effectively as material ones (Botting 2008: 42; Graham 2002: 10).

The structures of capitalism become a major strand of twentieth-century urban Gothic. Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927), for example, represents the systematic oppression, and ultimately the resistance, of the working class within a futuristic city. Cyberpunk typically engages capitalism in its later incarnations, when the digital realm has facilitated capital's continuing transformations, showing capital, as Karl Marx had predicted, becoming ever more loosened from the products that ostensibly drive it. Brian Jarvis notes that in transnational cyberfinance, "All that is solid melts into code. . . . [in] an increasingly *spectral* political economy" (Jarvis 2010: 21).

The twisted permutations of late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century capital are also the inspiration behind some of the twenty-first-century science fiction writing labeled "New Weird," texts combining transgressive body horror with urban science fiction (Vandermeer 2008: ix–x). Most notably, China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2000) can be read as a reverie on the predations rife in contemporary urban sites. His city of New Crobuzon is populated with monsters both moral and physical, with narrative voice prizing the perspective of the latter over the former. In just two examples, criminals are "Re-made" in "punishment factories," tortured with steampunk body modifications frequently with commercial value for wealthy business owners in mind, and the city's blind mayor has vagrants secretly murdered in order to harvest their eyes. Unlike Gothic texts of the 1880s, these atrocities are often wrought by people in authority. Yet they happen within an urban zone rich in the traditional textures of urban Gothic: "squat churches like troglodytic things, ragged awnings flickering, cobbled mazes in the old town, culs-de-sac, sewers riddling the earth like secular sepulchres, a new landscape of wasteground, crushed stone" (Miéville 2001: 2). The city is class-stratified, one protagonist writing mournfully of seeing "sleeping beggars that clutch each other and congeal for

warmth like lower creatures, forced back down evolutionary strata by poverty” (Miéville 2001: 72). The structures of authority in this city are drained of human compassion, dominated only by the brutal machinery of profit.

In the twenty-first century, the extraordinary transformations of capitalism continue to be a trigger for developments in urban and suburban Gothic. In twenty-first-century haunted house fictions, for example, the ghost-terrorized properties can evoke the shadow network of digital finance that underpins today’s vulnerable property markets (Jarvis 2010).

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY TRENDS

While the 1880s saw supernatural horrors gradually supplanted by human ones, this century has seen the supernatural return to cities. In a further difference, while late-nineteenth-century Gothic tends to feature lone monsters terrorizing a city, the twenty-first century has seen a surge in representations of urban zones populated by societies of supernatural creatures. Such representations are successors to Anne Rice’s novels, in that they build on her focus on the vampire as protagonist preoccupied with a search for fellowship. Films like Len Wiseman’s *Underworld* (2003) and Stephen Norrington’s *Blade* (1998), as well as role-playing games like White Wolf’s *Vampire: The Masquerade* (Rein-Hagen 1998) and *Vampire: The Requiem* (Marmell *et al.* 2004), depict cities riddled with networks of supernatural creatures with complex social hierarchies and internal feuds, while the television series *Being Human* (Whithouse 2009) even explores the domestic implications of supernatural house-share. In some cases, the only thing remotely “Gothic” about these texts is their sartorial aesthetic; in others, the texts’ narrative voice and plot trajectories are very much concerned with urban Gothic’s typical themes of degeneration and despair.

While vampires remain the quintessential urban predator in these texts, zombies are also making a notable comeback, alongside a fascination with the post-apocalyptic city to echo that of the 1880s. Yet while 1880s urban Gothic tends to represent apocalypse as a direct consequence of war, these twenty-first-century fictions tend to identify pharmaceutical experimentation or medical edge technologies as triggers for zombie epidemic and the collapse of civilization. In Francis Lawrence’s 2007 film remake of *I Am Legend* (loosely inspired by Richard Matheson’s 1954 novel), a zombie epidemic is caused by the mutation of a virus meant to be a cure for cancer; Danny Boyle’s 2002 film *28 Days Later* imagines a civilization tumbled when an engineered virus escapes a Cambridge laboratory; and Max Brooks’s novel *World War Z* (2006) imagines cities, and indeed the planet, devastated by zombie pandemic partly spread by corrupt trade in infected human organs.

As in previous eras, the unexpected fragility of cities continues to be a motif in urban Gothic. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001 transformed America’s sense of itself as relatively immune to direct attack when the emblems of financial and global power crumbled in moments. The cultural response to that event invites us to remember that terror (unlike horror) has always had a socio-political valence as well as an individual, emotional dimension (Punter 2009: 244). While the subsequent literature is too varied for any generalization, it is worth mentioning one strand here: texts that build the attack into a longer history of the

city as haunted site or spectral space. Patrick McGrath's *Ghost Town* (2005), for example, takes iconic images of the attacks and identifies historical precursors of those same images in the War of Independence, plague, factory disasters and other times past: people on fire jumping from buildings; city-dwellers struggling through smoky streets with blackened faces; and a sense that the city of New York has become "a place not so much of death as of the *terror* of death" (McGrath 2005: 201, emphasis in text). Though the ghosts change with each era, our cities remain ineradicably haunted.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1885) "Review of Degeneration Amongst Londoners by James Cantlie," *The Lancet*, 7 February: 264–65.
- Bergland, R. (2000) *The National Uncanny*, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Bhabha, H. (1997) "The World and the Home," in A. McClintock, A. Mufti and E. Shohat (eds) *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 445–55.
- Botting F. (1996) *Gothic*, London: Routledge.
- (1999) "The Gothic Production of the Unconscious," in D. Punter and G. Byron (eds) *Spectral Readings: Towards a Gothic Geography*, London: Palgrave, 11–36.
- (2008) *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions*, London: Routledge.
- Brantlinger, P. (1988). *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830–1914*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Conrad, J. (1995) *Heart of Darkness*, 1902, ed. R. Hampson, London: Norton.
- Dryden, L. (2003) *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Engels, F. (2011) Extract from "The Condition of the Working Class in England," 1845, in R. LeGates and F. Stout (eds) *The City Reader*, London: Routledge, 46–54.
- Freud, S. (1985) "The Uncanny," 1919, in A. Richards (ed.) *Art and Literature: The Penguin Freud Library*, Vol. 14, London: Penguin, 336–76.
- Gibson, W. (1984) *Neuromancer*, London: Gollancz.
- Graham, E. (2002) *Representations of the Post/Human*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Grunebaum, H. (2007) "Unburying the Dead in the 'Mother City': Urban Topographies of Erasure," *PMLA*, 122.1: 210–19.
- Hughes, W. (2003) "'An Angel Satyr Walks These Hills': Imperial Fantasies for a Post-Colonial World," *Gothic Studies*, 5.1: 121–28.
- Hurley, K. (2001) "The Modernist Abominations of William Hope Hodgson," in A. Smith and J. Wallace (eds) *Gothic Modernisms*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 29–43.
- Jarvis, B. (2010) "The Fall of the Hou\$e of Finance," in B. Cherry, P. Howell and C. Riddell (eds), *Twenty-First-Century Gothic*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 326–44.
- Jefferies, R. (2005) *After London or Wild England*, 1885, Cirencester: Echo Library Paperbackshop.
- Link, A. (2004) "'The Capitol of Darknesse': Gothic Spatialities in the London of Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor*," *Contemporary Literature*, 45.3: 516–37.

- Luckhurst, R. (2002) “The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the ‘Spectral Turn,’” *Textual Practice*, 16.3: 527–46.
- McGrath, P. (2005) *Ghost Town: Tales of Manhattan Then and Now*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Miéville, C. (2001) *Perdido Street Station*, 2000, London: Pan.
- Mighall, R. (2007) “Gothic Cities,” in C. Spooner and E. McEvoy (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, London: Routledge, 54–72.
- Moody, N. (2011) “The Gothic Punk Milieu in Popular Narrative Fictions,” in S. Wasson and E. Alder (eds) *Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 168–88.
- Murphy, B. (2009) *Suburban Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Punter, D. (1999) “Heart Lands: Contemporary Scottish Gothic,” *Gothic Studies*, 1.1: 101–18.
- (2001) “Introduction: The Ghost of a History,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell, vii–xiv.
- (2009) “Terror,” in M. Mulvey Roberts (ed.) *The Handbook of the Gothic*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 236–37.
- Sage, V. (1993) “Empire Gothic,” in C. Bloom (ed.) *Creepers*, London: Pluto, 3–23.
- Spencer, K. L. (1992) “Purity and Danger: Dracula, the urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis,” *ELH*, 59.1: 197–225.
- Sponser, C. (1993) “Beyond the Ruins,” *Science Fiction Studies*, 20.2: 251–65.
- Spooner, C. (2010) “Preface,” in B. Cherry, P. Howell, and C. Riddell, (eds), *Twenty-First-Century Gothic*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, ix–xii.
- Stevenson, R.L. (2002) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, 1886, ed. R. Mighall, London: Penguin.
- Stoker, B. (1993) *Dracula*, 1897, ed. M. Hindle, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Vandermeer, J. (2008) “The New Weird,” in A. Vandermeer and J. Vandermeer (eds) *The New Weird*, San Francisco: Tachyon, ix–xviii.
- Vidler, A. (1992) *The Architectural Uncanny*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Warwick, A. (2007) “Feeling Gothicky?” *Gothic Studies*, 9.1: 5–19.
- (2009) “Urban Gothic,” in M. Mulvey (ed.) *The Handbook of the Gothic*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 251–52.
- Wasson, S. (2010) *Urban Gothic of the Second World War*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wasson, S. and Alder, E. (2011) “Introduction,” in S. Wasson and E. Alder (eds) *Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1–18.
- Wells, H.G. (2005a) *The War of the Worlds*, 1898, ed. P. Parrinder, London: Penguin.
- (2005b) *The War in the Air*, 1921, ed. J. Winter, London: Penguin.
- (1895) *The Time Machine*, London: William Heinemann.
- (1939) *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, London: Secker and Warburg.

FURTHER READING

- Ackroyd, P. (1985) *Hawksmoor*, London: Hamish Hamilton. (Detective fiction depicting London as a city haunted by past crimes re-scripted for the present.)
- Bowen, E. (1981) *Collected Stories*, New York: Vintage. (Bowen’s stories from the 1930s to post-1950s abound in suburban and urban Gothic, both English and Irish.)
- Carpenter, J. (dir.) (1978) *Halloween*, Compass. (Suburban slasher in which the threat is human rather than supernatural.)

- Craven, W. (dir.) (1984) *Nightmare on Elm Street*, New Line. (Supernatural menace in suburbia.)
- Finney, J. (1955) *The Body Snatchers*, New York: Dell. (Fantasy of alien invasion that embodies period fears of dehumanization and Cold War peril; inspired multiple film adaptations.)
- Gray, A. (1981) *Lanark*, Edinburgh: Canongate. (An hallucinatory vision of 1980s Glasgow and modern alienation.)
- Hamilton, P. (1947) *Slaves of Solitude*, London: Constable. (Grim depiction of British wartime suburbia as a blend of asylum and torture chamber.)
- Hooper, Tobe (dir.) (1982) *Poltergeist*. MGM. (Suburban idyll compromised by a television-mediated supernatural and a house being built on graveyard.)
- Machen, A. (1894) *The Great God Pan*, London: John Lane. (Novel imagining London terrorized by a demonic female sexual predator.)
- Miller, F. (1987) *The Dark Knight Returns*, New York: DC Comics. (Influential revisioning of Batman depicting dystopian Gotham.)
- Moore, A. (1999) *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, vol. 1, London: Titan. (First of a series of graphic novels adapting Gothic classics, particularly those representing 1880s London.)
- Nolan, C. (dir.) (2005) *Batman Begins*, Warner. (The first of Nolan's critically-hailed updates to the Batman mythos.)
- Romero, G. (dir.) (1968) *Night of the Living Dead*, Continental. (Famous revision of the zombie myth using zombie epidemic as metaphor for American consumerism.)
- Scott, R. (dir.) (1982) *Blade Runner*. Warner. (Seminal cyberpunk film.)
- Stephenson, N. (1992) *Snow Crash*, New York: Bantam. (A decade after Gibson's *Neuromancer*, this cyberpunk novel depicts virtual spaces shaped by late capitalism and a material city of gated fortress suburbs.)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

GOTHIC IN CYBERSPACE



Bryan Alexander

What is Gothic about cyberspace? Posing this question requires the connection of two categories, the combination of which risks a variety of epistemic problems: we might easily commit categorical error by yoking together a literary movement with an information technology visualization, or fall afoul of current trends, depending on the currency and popularity of both terms at stake. Yet the analytical and historical intersection of these two domains, at a site which I have elsewhere called the *cybergothic* (Alexander 2000), constitutes a productive approach to understanding how we have acculturated and responded to digitally networked communications. Identifying the ways in which fiction and nonfiction use Gothic conventions to describe cyberspace reveals a series of critical tropes by which we collectively think through new technologies.

Deploying the term “cybergothic” requires a combination of several aspects of the Gothic tradition. To begin with, it translates the trope of haunted or fearsome space to cyberspace. William Gibson’s “consensual hallucination” (1984) becomes disturbing, even uncanny when understood in this sense. The opening image of *Alien* (Scott 1979) offers a compressed visualization of my intended meaning, with a high-technology artifact (a spacecraft) appearing on the screen like a pre-modern haunted castle. In addition to spaces, the cybergothic also describes uncanny bodies. As Kathleen Hayles (1999: 192ff) and others have taught us, cyberutopian rhetoric about bodilessness actually reinscribes offline notions of what it means to inhabit and perform a body. We should therefore expect non-digital Gothic body narratives also to reappear in the discourse of cyberspace. The human-seeming robot occupying the uncanny valley presents a useful visualization of this principle.

The cybergothic follows the well-worn Gothic tradition of displaying contemporary anxieties in fictionalized shapes or metaphorical forms. For example, modern anxieties about online presence (identity theft, untrustworthy personae, cyberbullying) assume monstrous appearances in this most uncanny of contemporary spaces. The often-criticized flat characterization of the horror genre recalls the problems we have with interpersonal communication online. There is something disturbing about the narrowness of interpersonal bandwidth, carried across by one or two media, echoing, perhaps, the uncanniness felt by people exposed to gramophones and

telephones for the first time (Sconce 2000, Kittler 1999: 21ff). The reproduction of the human self becomes semihuman, the body reduced to an unsettling representation, entering the uncanny valley as first theorized by Masahiro Mori in his 1970 essay, “Bukimi No Tani.” Cybergothic narratives also display forms of sexuality that specific audiences hold to be illicit. We see many instances of news media blaming the internet for purveying child pornography and/or depraving children’s mores, most recently in the sexting panic. Beyond sex and self, American and British news media repeatedly sought to describe an internet-based terrorist movement after the 9/11 attacks, an “e-Qaeda” forming ominously in the evil-enabling zone of cyberspace.

By identifying the cybergothic in these ways, including both haunted spaces and disturbing bodies, we add the domain of online life to the history of Gothic textuality. In fact, the cybergothic, at the level of definition, manifests a division between conceptualizing the Gothic as a mode concerned with fearsome corporeality and a sense of the Gothic as a means of exploring uncanny spaces. These two Gothic dimensions appear throughout the genre’s history, in both literary production and textual criticism (Carroll 1990: 34–35 and 42ff). The haunted house is opposed to the monster that inhabits it, spaces of terrifying transformation and confrontation set against often iconically abject characters (the vampire, the ghost, the zombie), the dreadful locations of survival horror computer games juxtaposed with the post-*Frankenstein* bodies of Shelley Jackson’s hypertext *Patchwork Girl* (1995). Today’s cybergothic requires us to bear in mind both Victor Frankenstein’s workspace of unhallowed creation and his “wretch,” his uncanny creature itself.

In this chapter I will develop the cybergothic in its historical arc, beginning with the earliest days of networked computing. Using fiction and news media as primary source evidence, I will identify key cybergothic themes, then advance into the first decade of the World Wide Web, where new contours to the cybergothic appear, prior to reaching into the web’s second decade and extending into new platforms, such as gaming and mobile computing. I conclude with a survey of current trends, assessing which are most likely to carry the cybergothic into the future.

GOTHIC PREHISTORY

The internet and the eighteenth-century Gothic share one common context: the inheritance of vast structures of military might. Of course, these are not the sole sources of either, as the literary Gothic draws on folklore, contemporary science, political unrest, religion and more, while the internet’s roots include aspirations for new textuality, breakthroughs in interface design, and the field of information retrieval. But the presence of military architectures shapes both the internet and early Gothic writing in their respective origins, providing the forms with settings as well as a sense of terrific, threatening power. Both William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794) and John Perry Barlow in his 1996 “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace” use the language of tyranny in order to describe those exercising power unjustly. Here, I employ the notion of “military space” in ways that are cognate with Paul Virilio and Sylvere Lotringer’s use of the phrase, namely “a constitution of a space having its own characteristics” embedded in, and structuring, socio-political systems (1997: 10ff).

Though these shared structures of power are inherited and nearly obsolete, they are still terrible. The inheritance dynamic is crucial to much of the Gothic tradition, especially its family romance plots, from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) onward. There is certainly an Oedipal dynamic to the picture of innocent young heroines or very young hackers battling fiendish aristocrats of birth or bureaucratic might. The scale of power is often broad enough to justify the mobilizing of utopian and dystopian tropes in these narratives, including that of the young romantic couple: Julia and Winston in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), the incestuous sibling rebels of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* (1818). The villainy of this power is importantly ironic, as their military structures are putatively defensive. Castles and fortified abbeys aim to protect not only leaders but also their community and heritage. ARPANET had several purposes, including strengthening America's defensive infrastructure in case of Soviet attack on both military and civilian targets. These physical and digital spaces become narrative screens for the contemporary imagination, available for the projection of local anxieties. We can populate those imaginative spaces with tyrants and rebels, monsters and innocents.

The Gothic first emerged during a period when large military fortifications appeared in many European cities and towns. Siege warfare developed extensively during the long reign of Louis XIV; France and its opponents constructed elaborate systems of fortifications. The success of these networks altered the strategies and pacing of warfare, which became focused on taking and defending fortified places. Engineers had used seventeenth-century mathematics to hone defenses, and the early eighteenth century advanced this integration of science and war. As Jim Bennett and Stephen Johnston argue, "Just as contemporary civil architecture was founded on geometry . . . so too the new science of fortification rested on a geometrical foundation" (1996: 12). Forts became immense structures built to intricate measurements for maximizing or minimizing the effects of firepower. Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban, the most impressive fortifier of the time, brought the techniques of siegecraft to such a rationalized level that the spectacles were no longer the Middle Ages' chaotic struggles, but rational matters adhering to regular schedules.

With the end of Louis XIV's wars in 1715, European siegecraft reached a developmental plateau, followed by a progressive decline from the mid-century onward. Wars in the 1740s saw a shifting emphasis in warfare toward rapid operational movement, and away from multiple sieges. Maurice de Saxe, the man responsible for French military triumphs in the War of Polish Succession (1733–38), succeeded by spending less time on what one biographer calls "fortress mania" (White 1962: 91, 268), practicing rapid advances and bypassing enemy strongpoints instead. In his popular 1757 military treatise, *Mes Rêveries*, Saxe argues for replacing many of the military functions of fortifications with improved army morale and organization. Careful training and new troop formations, such as the legion or division, would produce "visible form[s] of support," logistical coherence, and command and control – more cheaply and flexibly than by networks of fortified cities. Furthermore, "Instead of permanent fortresses . . . temporary forts . . . were to be constructed as the progress of the campaign dictated" (White 1962: 268). Fortifications were growing obsolete. Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67) imagines this transition satirically, as an epic misadventure of comic, even pathetic obsession.

Frederick the Great, the best-known eighteenth-century military mind and practitioner, continued this anti-fortification mode of thinking. Although he continued the heritage of besieging some enemy cities while protecting his own, the Prussian king sent his armies on fast-moving campaigns, bypassing fortified frontiers where appropriate. Frederick's victories represented a synthesis of fortification and mobility, as opposed to a simple focus on the former (Duffy 1985: 145–47), and their fame influenced other leaders to deemphasize fortress mania. For example, Jacques Guibert argued persuasively in 1772 for troops "living off the land in order to increase the speed of operations . . . critici[zing] reliance on fortifications" (Black 1994: 153). Other French critics, such as Mesnil-Durand and De Bourcet, sought to deemphasize the Vauban tradition in favor of fluid warfare and defense in depth (Best 1982: 52, 59).

By the late eighteenth century, fortification had declined further, to the point where one historian could observe that the systems were on the verge of "wholesale dismantling" (Duffy 1985: 153). In 1781–82 the Austrian Emperor Joseph II ordered the demolition of a major network of fortresses in the "cockpit of Europe," the Austrian Netherlands, which "diminish[ed] the role of permanent fortification in future wars" (Duffy 1985: 166). During a 1787 conflict, Prussian armies captured a series of major Dutch fortifications with significant siegecraft. French revolutionary armies, having lost much siegecraft and material to royalist flight, opened up an age of mobile warfare. In contrast, Frederick the Great's rapid campaigns were revisited as slow-paced (Best 1982: 51). Fortified towns functioned as supply and communication anchors, as they had done for centuries, but French commanders tended to follow Saxe rather than Vauban in their lack of siege-mania. Subsequent warfare, driven largely by Napoleon Bonaparte, further reduced fortification's place in military planning.

Without a major place in strategy, state support for fortifications became harder to justify, and eventually declined altogether. Unlike armies, whose defunding prompts the disappearance of or pillaging by soldiers, sidelined fortresses simply remained present throughout Europe. Understaffed, occasionally untenanted and physically eroding, the inheritance of eighteenth-century military architecture brooded ominously over towns and cities as enormous symbols of reason and power. Proto-Gothic British writing often closely linked war and mysterious terror, as in the odd pairing of battlefield satire and graveyard horror in Smollett's *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753). Gothic texts deepened this connection, linking war's old architecture with the psychology of horror.

Ann Radcliffe's novels, for instance, return to fort after fort, each of them heavily freighted with the remnants of tyrannical power. Her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), is in many ways a war novel. Its main plot is framed within a war narrative, a political and military battle between two families. Radcliffe's next two novels – *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) – add fortification elements to both plot and setting. The contours of a militarized society help articulate the narrative. In all three fictions, post-military spaces (a fortress, a fortified abbey, both abandoned) organize plots of concealment and revelation. Here, as elsewhere, Radcliffe anticipates Freud and Blanchot, locating suppressed desires and their family matrices in underground chambers. Radcliffe's most popular novel during her time, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), develops this

strategy further. The capacious plot is bookended by a psychologically positive anti-Gothic castle, the Chateau-le-Blanc, associated with light and happiness. The hero's military obligations and socialization frame, even drive the romance plot, which itself centers on the restoration and warfare around an abandoned and nightmarish fortress. Montoni, a villain often cited as one antecedent to Dracula, obtains and occupies Udolpho, using it as a staging ground for plots against women and irregular raids into the surrounding districts, preying on commerce. Like Dracula, Montoni is finally defeated by being trapped outside his defensive walls.

Fortifications like Montoni's, or, even more crucially, the Bastille of pre-revolutionary Paris will become celebrated emblems of a tyrannical ancien régime to be shattered, or at least escaped from, in texts as diverse as Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1804) and Sade's *120 Days of Sodom* (1785). The explosion of Gothic novels, plays and translations in the British market of the 1790s onward, then, would revise these spectacular military objects into visionary spaces for horror and terror. As the Gothic expanded beyond Britain, other nations sought fearsome architecture of their own. American landscapes, starting with Charles Brockden Brown, lacked such ready-made architectural nightmares; consequently, Brown, Poe and subsequent American writers translated the mode by inventing new spaces and investing old ones as Gothic locales: remote caves, haunted houses, European buildings copied in America (see for example the fantastic fortification in H.P. Lovecraft's "Rats in the Walls" [1924]), and the emergent industrial city.

THE HAUNTED INTERNET

This [Gothic] genre was at first identified with a particular kind of edifice. In later variations any kind of enclosed space, so long as it is associated with mysteries or secrets, may serve.

(Williams 1997: 128)

Somewhat like the Gothic, the internet initially appeared as a part-military project. The second half of the twentieth century saw the construction of several large military structures for the Cold War, which included huge technological research and development movements. During the 1960s the United States' military research department, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA, later DARPA) funded a project to network computers across the country. Bolt, Beranek, and Newman (BBN), a Boston computing business, successfully built the ARPANET architecture which eventually came to be known as the internet. For various reasons, academics participated in its construction, including the building of a cutting-edge computer science project and experimenting with collaboration technologies (Waldrop 2001). The military motivation remains controversial, but involved supporting American war-fighting capabilities before or during a nuclear exchange. As the war in Vietnam rose and fell, ARPANET grew steadily, networking university computers in its stead. While much of its use was non-military – discussions, early computer games – nascent cyberspace certainly remained a part of the military sphere. In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration, playing on Cold War anxieties for the last time, renamed ARPA as DARPA, with a capital D for Defense, thus driving home a strong rhetorical point about notions of origin and control. The film *WarGames* (1983)

offered a fictional representation of this intertwined civilian and military network world, with a teen hacker stumbling into the Third World War's preparations. The internet was an architectural structure that allowed for multiple inhabitants, including the military.

That military role shaded away as the internet grew considerably in the 1980s, and separate defense networks appeared, such as MILNET and the Non-classified Internet Protocol (IP) Router Network (NIPRNet). The civilian internet developed protocols and spawned more offshoots as the Cold War ramped down: listservs, Usenet, bulletin boards (BBs), Gopherspace, and file transfer programs (FTP). The open nature of this world contrasted sharply with the military networks, and also with the then-reigning mass media. It suggested early radio with its demotic, DiY ethos and cultural ferment, but historical analogy did not become a major cultural response to the internet's advent. Instead, popular culture experimented with a series of descriptive discourses, such as the myth of the American west, in the naming of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).

It is in this context that the cybergothic appears as an imaginative construction of the emergent internet. From the late 1970s and into the 1980s, cybergothic texts began to appear, grow and multiply, developing, as they did, primarily within the fantastic genre of late-twentieth-century fiction. Its themes and range set the stage for subsequent visions. Ridley Scott emblematically fused Gothic and high technology in *Alien* (1979), with the haunted castle/starship referred to above. In Scott's film, haunting occurs on several levels, starting with the lurking, titular creature who hunts and slaughters most of the crew. The space is also haunted by the gradually-revealed family secret, namely the willingness of the ship's owners to manipulate and sacrifice the crew. The family aspect is driven home by the name of the vessel's controlling and cryptic computer, Mother. The innocent crew is betrayed by the authorities it trusted, and destroyed by the revelations of secrets, monsters and tyrannical power. *Nostromo* is a space of technological Gothic, illuminated by the early digital. Its space is literally illuminated by the digital in the eerie early scene of the ship's bridge coming to life, with computer screens talking to each other through visual and audio exchanges, all without human intervention. The sleeping crew awakens into this data-limned environment, and all but one never leave it.

John Varley's 1984 short story "Press Enter []" is also based on a monster, but a virtual one. This creature is a digital entity inhabiting the internet, capable of committing murder and other actions through linked, appropriated devices. Nameless, the entity is apparently affiliated with national security and digital networks. As the hacker heroine explains, "I've looked around at NORAD – that's the guys who get to fight the next war . . . The Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security [Agency] . . . Something knew I was there" (Varley 1984: 281). Another hacker discovers and then gets killed by it, victim of homebrew technology described as follows: "This is the most devious electronic weapon ever devised. It's armored like a battleship . . . [the hacker] would [use it to] come in like a cruise missile" (Varley 1984: 253). The hacker's weapon fails him. That weapon goes on to kill the heroine, and nearly the non-hacker hero too. After the technologically challenged narrator shuns the "devious electronic weapon," the entity makes a final threatening appearance before him, in a blend of the discourses of technology and horror:

I heard some of those far-off musical tones that live in phone wires. Echoes of conversations taking place a thousand miles away. And something infinitely more distant and cool.

I do not know what they have incubated out there at the NSA. I don't know if they did it on purpose, or if it just happened, or if it even has anything to do with them, in the end. But I know it's out there, because I heard its soul breathing on the wires.

(Varley 1984: 288)

Again the NSA returns, and the vast network of cyberspace turns from something playful into a zone of dire threat. Ultimately the hero unplugs from all infrastructure, sunk into a paranoid (but sometimes accurate) state. "Press Enter []"'s born-digital entity will return as a cyberpunk trope, but here it offers a fine example of cybergothic. Spawned from the apparatus of war, such entities combine folkloric genies with Gothic tyrants, fantastic villains updated for the putatively posthuman era.

Contemporary with Varley's story, William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) created a series of haunted spaces. One is an *Alien*-like haunted castle in space. Freeside is "a fairy castle," "a real castle, all stone and sunsets" (Gibson 1984: 207, 154),

a body grown in upon itself, a Gothic folly. Each space in Straylight is in some way secret, this endless series of chambers linked by passages, by stairwells vaulted like intestines, where the eye is trapped in narrow curves, carried past ornate screens, empty alcoves.

(Gibson 1984: 172)

With this, Christophe Grunenberg's account of twentieth-century Gothic spaces begs comparison: "The house functions as a matrix and the exploration of its hidden rooms, forbidden spaces, locked doors . . . [it] summons to consciousness displaced and undigested experiences and dreams" (Grunenberg 1997: 176). Freeside is also the abode of numerous family secrets in full Gothic flower: hidden power, deviant sexuality, physical monstrosity, the creation of monsters. Two of those monsters occupy Gibson's more famous creation, a lushly visual cyberspace imagined from the time's basic textual technology. Cyberspace, or the matrix, is defined by power's brooding towers of power, like the opening shot of Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982). Gibson's cyberspace is haunted by human and inhuman tyrants, imprisoned innocents, dangerous secrets, warped bodies, violence and doubles: an ideal Gothic landscape, in short, framed by information architecture. *Neuromancer* builds on the less fearsome cyberspace visions of *Tron* (Lisberger 1982) and Vernor Vinge's *True Names* (1981), adding a darker, more unsettling layer on top of those first, neon-lit descriptions. With the work of Gibson, Varley, Scott and others we glimpse the emergent Gothic towers and tropes of representations of cyberspace (Botting 1995: 163), the rise of the cybergothic.

THE FEARSOME WEB

We are very interested in spreading the web to other areas, and having gateway servers for other data. Collaborators welcome!

(Berners-Lee 1991)

With this call, Tim Berners-Lee launched the World Wide Web in 1991, and it took several years for the Gothic to appear on that new platform, extending itself from the pre-browser internet. As the web rapidly grew in size and social reach throughout the 1990s, Gothic fiction and news reporting vied to describe the new medium. Media panics in the 1990s over other issues such as Satanism, child abuse, music and violent crime are well known, but journalism's portrayal of emergent cyberspace as a terrifying place was equally Gothic. By the early 1990s, the hacker had appeared as a threatening monster, capable of destroying important systems and intruding into one's intimate life. The notorious Kevin Mitnick had been arrested after a long, public career in theft and data intrusion (Shimomura and Markoff 1996). Members of the Legion of Doom were neutralized after well-publicized campaigns (Sterling 1992; Slatalla and Quittner 1995).

Computer-mediated sexual panics also won airtime. *Time* magazine's July 1995 Cyberporn issue offers exemplary work, beginning with its lurid cover: a child stares at us, eyes wide, mouth agape, skin blued as if by a television screen or oxygen deprivation. Beneath this image runs the fiery legend, "CYBERPORN." Drawing on contemporary fears of pedophilia, this image from America's leading news weekly signals the decade's compulsive linking of representations of sexuality to children's digital abilities. Phillip Elmer-Dewitt's article continues in this fearsome strand, with phrases like "the Marquis de Sade of cyberspace" and an eerie photo of a naked, somewhat deformed human body embracing a monitor (Elmer-Dewitt 1995): *Time* recapitulating David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983). Again the theme of children and sexual media returns. Subsequent years saw the United States Congress craft policies for the regulation of the internet, precisely in response to such nightmarish visions: the Communications Decency Act (CDA, 1996), the Child Online Protection Act (COPA, 1998). Further panics would ensue.

Fiction in this period produced a series of complementary cybergothic visions, such as the ongoing cyberpunk movement in science fiction, and films ranging from *The Net* (1995) to *Serial Experiments: Lain* (1998). Few explicitly single out the web as story material. Instead, they mobilize various periodic technologies, including surveillance hardware, virtual reality and underlying code, developing ideas from the internet upon which the web runs. The web is sometimes instrumental in these works as one communications technology among many, but rarely central to a cybergothic tale. For example, the present-day light-cyberpunk plot in Neal Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon* (1999) centers on a hidden WWII bunker, which contains a series of family secrets. The protagonists' data business, based on novel encryption, punningly runs into problems from this historical crypt.

The X-Files (Carter 1993–2002) addressed the cybergothic throughout its long syndicated run. Beyond more traditional or non-digitally-updated Gothic themes (American backwoods Gothic, vampires, housing development demons, serial killers), *X-Files* portrayed a series of computer-enabled hauntings, such as an office building haunted by former staff through elaborately cutting-edge digital surveillance infrastructure. The hacker, that cyberpunk staple, was often led to confrontations with the uncanny or even numinous, especially in episodes scripted by William Gibson. At a larger level, the show's project of depicting a terrifying military-security apparatus updated the classically Gothic power-mad and conspiratorial villain. This establishment exerted its power in cyberspace through a variety of mechanisms:

secret plans; scientific experiments, such as digital tools as goads to violence. Although the conspiracy was historical, even retro in some ways, such as Cancer Man's mid-twentieth-century career, it nevertheless used modern technology to maintain itself. Its victims appear as Gothic innocents, virtuous or simply caught up in schemes beyond their ken.

The Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) offers a similar view of digitally-enabled authority-battling heroic hackers, ramped up to ontological or Baudrillardian levels. At the movie's center is a vision of the entire (remaining) human race, held captive in literally lightning-lit Gothic architectural spaces of spires and mist. People are "coppertops," somatic fuel for machines, their obedience ensured by an elaborate virtual world. The rebels naturally take to the Matrix's cellar, working through literal substructures and tunnels, hacking through virtual back doors and secret entrances. The simulated environment ("the world pulled over your eyes," in Morpheus's memorable phrase) positions itself against the Gothic, often brightly lit and comfortably above ground. In contrast, its dark, exceptional moments display urban decay, and that is where rebellion occurs: Trinity's opening battle against police and agents in a dark, decrepit building; the start of Neo's fatal battle against Smith in a forlorn subway station. The heroes ultimately connect these dark and bright spaces, winning through death in the sewers and climaxing in Neo's skyward flight over a gleaming city. The film's popularity led to a transmedia franchise, something beyond my scope here, but one which attests to cybergothic's considerable market appeal.

By 2000 the cybergothic had become evident in fiction and nonfiction. It represented a way of looking at the suddenly digital world, representing it as a space of horror and the uncanny. Market success, translation into public policy and the topical diversity of such representations – ontological terror, body horror, deviant sexuality, exploitation, military power, the heroic or villainous hacker – suggest the cultural power of the cybergothic.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, OR CYBERGOTHIC RAMPANT

After two decades of the web's existence, the new century's first cybergothic narratives had become established in fiction and nonfiction alike. Media panics were no longer required to contextualize frightening representations of digital life, as such accounts appeared steadily in and of their own accord. Cybergothic fictions featured in "old" and new media, including computer gaming. Something like a self-reinforcing loop seems to have been at work here, with themes recurring in both journalistic attacks on frightening media and stories presented within those media.

A sampling of news stories from 2005 exemplifies such journalistic cybergothic themes. For example, the *Christian Science Monitor* concerned itself with blogging, which was somehow thought to expose its underaged authors to internet-enabled murderers and/or pedophiles (MacDonald 2005). The lack of evidence about actual crimes committed in this fashion does not deter insinuation and speculation. Leading *Washington Post* writers worried about al-Qaeda "migrat[ing] from physical space to cyberspace," whereby the availability of terrorist materials online becomes a jihadist specter haunting the digital world (Coll and Glasser 2005). Online

pornography and digital piracy persist, leading the opponents of both to make contradictory arguments for control (Felten 2005). More examples are easy to find. The media image of the internet as a festering, corrupting zone is everywhere evident.

Cybergothic continued to thrive in fiction, once again complementing contemporary works in news media. Vernor Vinge had contributed perhaps the first visualization of cyberspace with his 1981 short story “True Names,” then infused science fiction space opera with versions of electronic discussion boards in *Fire Upon the Deep* (1993). In 2006 he returned to the near future for *Rainbows End*, a combination spy thriller and academic novel. It is not a Gothic novel per se, but its espionage plot which frames the action draws heavily upon cybergothic’s established conventions. Several intelligence agencies, and a mysterious actor who may or may not be an artificial intelligence, battle over control of biological weapons and layers of cyberspace. They work through subterfuge and mislead human agents, who never fully grasp their roles. Children, academics, soldiers and even campus buildings are all counters in this game. In fact, the intelligence schemes are never fully explained by the novel’s conclusion, and their controlling powers remain both hidden and intact. The protagonist’s happy ending (his intelligence and body restored, family relationships under repair) is undermined by this dark context. Like *Neuromancer*’s dark conclusion, the virtual towers remain standing over humanity.

Charles Stross set a series of novels and short stories within a cybergothic world, starting with *The Atrocity Archives* (2004). This “Laundry sequence” is a mashup of spy thriller with Lovecraftian horror, cast in a satirical vein and narrated from a geek’s perspective. Typical plots involve that geek, the perpetual protagonist, investigating a mystery that combines occultic evil with technology or higher mathematics. Stross blends traditional occult horror (forbidden tomes, invocations, demons) with technology (open source software, system administration, wireless protocols). In “Concrete Jungle,” the villain suborns London’s CCTV surveillance system in order to summon up a supernatural attack. Bob describes the scheme thus:

some nameless genius has worked out that the CCTV cameras dotting our green and pleasant land can be networked together, their inputs fed into a software emulation of a basilisk’s brain, and turned into some kind of omnipresent look-to-kill death net.

(Stross 2004: 273)

“Death net,” the “software emulation of a basilisk’s brain”: this take on the cybergothic, this particular blend of digital technology and its conceptual logic mixed with occult horror, operates throughout Stross’s Laundry series.

THE NEXT WAVE OF UNCANNY CYBERSPACE

The cybergothic now stretches before us as the work of decades and multiple media. It is established enough to be familiar in fiction and journalism. How will this form develop further? Two recent trends are very active, and could well persist. First, mobile devices have been viewed with suspicion for years. Their global proliferation has evoked some interesting Gothic tales. For example, tales of spirits associated with cell phone calls have appeared in Brunei (Othman 2005). In 2003 Takashi

Miike released a horror film, *One Missed Call*, based on a killing curse attached to a mobile phone network (a neat augmentation of what *The Ring* did with videotape and phone). As featurephones gradually give way to more powerful smartphones we can perhaps expect to see more of these stories. Second, therapists and journalists have increasingly deployed the medical language of addiction in order to describe excessive digital technology use. Gaming is often the culprit here, threatening to destroy the attention and lives of the unwary (Sutter 2012). A front-cover *Newsweek* article complained that the internet in general was driving us insane through the addictive practices that it called into place (Dokoupil 2012). Addiction is a powerful concept, capable of summoning up significant medical, economic and policy resources.

To be sure, not all technologies can become uncanny. Apple products, for example, remain steadfastly un-creepy, perhaps even self-consciously so. Other technologies become highly contested. A social networking site such as Facebook, for instance, may offend legions of users by its privacy setting changes, but is now used by approximately one billion people without much of a sordid reputation. The 2010 film *The Social Network* portrayed Facebook's founder as a weak Gothic villain, disdainful and egotistical, whose every success seemed to foretell horror under David Fincher's direction, Aaron Sorkin's writing and the music of Nine Inch Nails. Yet the film's version of Zuckerberg is also pathetic, an interpersonal failure rather than a Radcliffean tyrant. Media studies celebrate Facebook and link it to crime without much consistency; this struggle for definition is a trend to track. The digital world continues to show an enormous amount of creativity. We will almost certainly see the emergence here of new hardware and software, all of which might be capable of eliciting new iterations of the fearsome media tendency. The cybergothic will probably extend forward into the next big thing, screening our anxieties and offering new stories as it does so.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, B. (2000) "Cybergothic: the uncanny acculturation of the internet," *Mindjack*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.mindjack.com/feature/cybergothic.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Bennett, J. and Johnston, S. (1996) *The Geometry of War: 1580–1750*, Oxford: Museum of the History of Science.
- Berners-Lee, T. (1991) "WorldWideWeb: summary," alt.hypertext Usenet posting, August 6, 1991. Online. Available HTTP: <<https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en&fromgroups=#!msg/alt.hypertext/eCTkkOoWTAY/bJGhZyooXzkJ>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Best, G. (1982) *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe 1770–1870*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Black, J. (1994) *European Warfare 1660–1815*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Botting, F. (1995) *Gothic*, London: Routledge.
- Carroll, N. (1990) *The Philosophy of Horror*, London: Routledge.
- Coll, S. and Glasser, S. (2005) "Terrorists Turn to the Web as Base of Operations," *Washington Post*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/05/AR2005080501138.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).

- “Cyberporn” (1995) *Time*, July 3, 1995. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19950703,00.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Dokoupil, T. (2012) “Is the Web Driving Us Mad?” *Newsweek*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/07/08/is-the-internet-making-us-crazy-what-the-new-research-says.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Duffy, C. (1985) *The Fortress in the Age of Vauban and Frederick the Great 1660–1789*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Elmer-Dewitt, P. (1995) “ONLINE EROTICA: ON A SCREEN NEAR YOU”, *Time*, July 3, 1995. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983116,00.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Felten, E. (2005) “Godwin’s Law, Updated,” blog post. Online. Available HTTP: <<https://freedom-to-tinker.com/blog/felten/godwins-law-updated/>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Gibson, W. (1984) *Neuromancer*, New York: Ace.
- Grunenberg, C. (ed.) (1997) *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth-Century Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hayles, K. (1999) *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jackson, J. (1995) *Patchwork Girl*, Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems.
- Kittler, F. (1999) *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. G. Winthrop-Young and M. Wutz, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- MacDonald, G. (2005) “Teens: It’s a diary. Adults: It’s unsafe,” *Christian Science Monitor*. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0525/p11S02-lifp.html>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Othman, A. (2005) “Ghostly ‘Mobile’ Claims,” Radio Television Brunei. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://web.archive.org/web/20061125053308/http://www.brudirect.com/DailyInfo/News/Archive/May05/150505/nite02.htm>> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Sconce, J. (2000) *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shimomura, T. and Markoff, J. (1996) *Takedown: The Pursuit and Capture of Kevin Mitnick, America’s Most Wanted Computer Outlaw – By the Man Who Did It*, New York: Hyperion.
- Slatalla, M. and Quittner, J. (1995) *Masters of Deception: The Gang That Ruled Cyberspace*, New York: Harper Perennial.
- Sterling, B. (1992) *The Hacker Crackdown*, New York: Bantam.
- Stross, C. (2004) *The Atrocity Archive*, New York: Ace
- Sutter, J. (2012) “5 warning signs of gaming addiction,” *CNN*. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/05/tech/gaming-gadgets/gaming-addiction-warning-signs/index.html?hpt=hp_c2> (accessed November 30, 2012).
- Varley, J. (1984) “Press Enter [],” in *The John Varley Reader*, New York: Ace Trade.
- Virilio, P. and Lotringer, S. (1997) *Pure War*, revised edition, trans M. Polizzotti. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Waldrop, M. (2001) *The Dream Machine: J.C.R. Licklider and the Revolution That Made Computing Personal*, New York: Penguin.
- White, J. (1962) *Marshall of France: The Life and Times of Maurice de Saxe*, Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Williams, A. (1997) “Edifying Narratives,” in C. Grunenberg (ed.) *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth-Century Art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 121–51.

FURTHER READING

- Jackson, S. (1995) *Patchwork Girl*, Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems. (A Gothic tale springing from a scene in *Frankenstein*. Victor Frankenstein creates a bride for the monster, but Mary Shelley runs off with her. They voyage across the world and through experimental textuality).
- Nakamura, R. (1998) *Serial Experiments Lain*, TV Tokyo. (Japanese anime approach to cybergothic, through an unusual protagonist and a Lynchian sensibility).
- Sconce, J. (2000) *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*, Durham: Duke University Press. (The best history of modern fearsome media).
- Stross, C. (2004) *The Atrocity Archive*, New York: Ace (This and the other “Laundry” stories are fine examples of an especially geeky cybergothic, via a mashup with espionage fiction).
- Vinge, V. (2006) *Rainbows End*, New York: Tor. (Remixes cybergothic into a story about education).
- Wachowski, A. and L. (1999) *The Matrix*, Warner Brothers. (Visionary, ambitious cybergothic by way of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave).

This page intentionally left blank

PART III

GOTHIC READERS AND WRITERS



This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

GOTHIC AND THE PUBLISHING
WORLD, 1780–1820

—♦—

Anthony Mandal

“Dear creature! How much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished Udolpho, we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you.”

“Have you, indeed! How glad I am! What are they all?”

“I will read you their names directly; here they are, in my pocket-book. Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. Those will last us some time.”

“Yes, pretty well; but are they all horrid, are you sure they are all horrid?”

Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818) (2006: 33)

Appearing early on in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1818), this giddy exchange between two young readers captures the contagious popularity of the Gothic at the turn of the nineteenth century. The list of seven (actual) titles that Isabella Thorpe reels out from her pocketbook to Catherine Morland conveys the paradigmatic ingredients of contemporary Gothic fiction, replete as it is with castles and forests, horribly mysterious warnings, Teutonic locations, orphaned protagonists and the raising of the dead. Despite the girls’ excited chatter, Anglophone Gothic was considerably older than its end-of-century fashionableness suggests, having made its first appearance in Britain with the publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. Take-up was low over the intervening quarter of a century, and it was not until the appearance of Ann Radcliffe’s novels from 1789 onward, as well as her many imitators in the 1790s, that a true “market” for Gothic fictions emerged. The underlying reasons for this period of slow burn followed by a veritable explosion lie in a complex confluence of legal, economic, technological and demographic determinants. One key factor for the success of Gothic was its flexibility as a form, allowing it to permeate all sorts of literary genres and markets: the circulating-library novel, poetical works, popular drama, chapbooks and bluebooks. This chapter will examine the market for Gothic novels that would have been read by circulating-library patrons like Catherine and Isabella, not to mention Austen herself. More than for any other genre, the material patterns of production and

circulation that drove the mainstream Romantic novel best capture the conditions that stimulated the popular appetite for Gothic literature during its first flowering in Britain.

THE ROMANTIC BOOK TRADE

The eighteenth century witnessed an unprecedented rate of growth in the demand for the published word, marking the final stages of the transformation of Britain into a print-dependent society, both in the profusion of textual matter and in the expanding demographic of readers. According to the bookseller James Lackington,

the sale of books in general has increased prodigiously within the last twenty years. According to the best estimation I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now than were sold twenty years since.

(Lackington 1791: 254)

Recognizing an opportunity in the trade, Lackington made his fortune as a seller of remaindered books at low prices, listing some 12,000 items in his first catalogue of 1779, a figure which grew to 30,000 within five years, and advertising himself as the “Cheapest Bookseller in the World.” Despite Lackington’s success with selling discounted books, the biggest market for fiction was not the individual purchaser, but circulating libraries, which were one of the main success stories of the Romantic literary marketplace. Circulating libraries allowed patrons who paid a membership fee to borrow a certain number of books over a set period of time. As will be discussed later in this chapter, books were expensive items to produce, making them, in turn, expensive ones to purchase. Owing to their bulk, but also to assist in distributing a small number of copies among a large readership, the average novel was published in multi-volume format, typically the “triple-decker” or novel in three volumes. In this way, a circulating-library proprietor could purchase a few copies of a popular novel, but loan out each volume to individual patrons, thus maximizing the profitability of the book. Circulating-library owners could make a significant income from the demand for the latest works, as attested to by the fortunes of the Noble brothers in the 1780s, William Lane’s Minerva Library in the 1790s and Henry Colburn’s English and Foreign Circulating Library in the 1800s. (See Chapter 15 in this volume for a full account of reading practices during the period.)

In addition to the emergence of circulating libraries, the expansion of print culture during the eighteenth century is attributable to a number of other factors. Most notable among these were the growth of the book trade in provincial England and Scotland (Feather 1985), and the emergence of a sustained periodical culture. The diffusion of published material in such diverse forms suffused the Romantic period with print, and it is no surprise that the novel, a form paradigmatically imbricated with the fortunes of trade publishing, was the emergent literary genre of the era. The ubiquity of print was abetted by the convoluted transforming legal relationship between text, publisher and author. Since the establishment of the first printing presses in England at the close of the fifteenth century, publishing had been the purview of a small cartel of firms based principally in or around London: what John Feather has

termed an “oligopoly” (Feather 2006: 80). To safeguard its interests, the London oligopoly employed a system of protectionism sanctioned by a policy of government regulation that operated in its favor. This continued for over two centuries, and was reinforced by the 1709 Statute of Anne, in which all existing rights were confirmed as the property of the current owners for 21 years, while new copies were protected for 14 years, with the possibility of an extension by a further 14 (Deazley 2004). The incentive behind the 1709 Act had been to encourage the diffusion of print by protecting the rights of its producers; however, its indirect effect was to enshrine the notion of “perpetual” copyright and to strengthen the position of the oligopoly. The result was a risk-averse and slow-moving publishing market that operated under a protectionist regime, thus limiting competition and slowing innovation.

A challenge to this state of affairs emerged through differing interpretations of copyright by the Scots and English legal systems, when Scottish publishers began to print books that were covered by the Statute of Anne in England, but not in Scotland. That in itself was not a problem: what constituted the difficulty was the traversal of these texts back into the north of England. English publishers decided to act, deeming this a breach of the law. However, while the English Court of Chancery recognized copyright in its abstract sense as an extension of the common law of property, the Scottish Court of Session could not untether property rights from a material object. This division unraveled the concept of perpetual copyright in the case of *Donaldson v. Becket*, which revolved around action taken by Thomas Becket to prevent the Edinburgh publishers Alexander and John Donaldson from reprinting James Thomson’s *The Seasons* in 1771. After a series of skirmishes in the courts which initially fell in Becket’s favor, the case was appealed in the House of Lords, which deemed that perpetual copyright was ultimately against the public interest, thereby limiting the term to a maximum period of 28 years, after which a text would enter the public domain. As Feather notes, “The London booksellers . . . had been comprehensively and successfully challenged by Scottish entrepreneurs. It was their response to that challenge which saw the emergence of the publisher as the dominant figure in the trade in printed books in Britain” (Feather 2006: 68). Publishers in the metropolis had little choice but to adopt practices more closely aligned with free market capitalism, as they could no longer rely on existing copyrights, which had been opened to republication by anyone once the statutory term expired. This led to the growth of cheap reprint series, but also forced publishers to hunt for innovation by seeking out new works that would generate further income.

The movement from the post-1709 protectionist regime toward the era ushered in by *Donaldson v. Becket* decisively realigned the concept of literary ownership, so that “The relationship between the author, his work and the reading public came to be understood in terms of the book, the ideas contained therein, and the way in which those ideas were expressed” (Deazley 2004: 222–23). Given the shift in emphasis away from publishers’ monopolistic rights, their fates became more contingently bound with those of their authors, while legal recognition of writers’ rights continued to grow. A further Copyright Act of 1814 would in fact affirm this relationship more transparently, with literary property being extended to 28 years or the lifetime of the author, whichever was longer, thereby consolidating the legal link between authors and their works. The impact of these legislative changes on productivity in the trade was seismic, as William St Clair observes:

After 1774 a huge, previously suppressed, demand for reading was met by a huge surge in the supply of books, and was caught up in a virtuous cycle of growth . . . The decision of 1774 transferred, through lower prices, a huge quantum of purchasing power from book producers to book buyers.

(St Clair 2004: 115)

There was a fundamental move away from the conservative coterie model toward one based on competition for both new authors and new readers, driving the Romantic book trade forward in new and exciting ways.

New publishers emerged toward the end of the century unrestrained by tradition, seeking to capture the existing market and generate new ones. But even the older firms became canny players of the transforming market: the Noble brothers, who had emerged in the 1740s, capitalized on the changing times and established themselves as pioneering publishers of formula fiction in the last quarter of the century. Such practices set the model a generation later for William Lane's notorious "Minerva Press," which flourished through the Romantic period (Blakey 1935). Other recently established firms, such as Longmans and John Murray, were less fixed on swamping the market with volume and would establish themselves as respectable imprints of long standing (both imprints remain in operation at the time of writing). Whether opportunistic purveyors or respectable businessmen, these newer houses no longer relied on the established policy of buying joint stock in books, instead pursuing a competitive agenda that stimulated diversification, so that during the first decade of the nineteenth century, roughly 27,000 books were published, followed by steady growth over the succeeding decades (Eliot 1994).

GOTHIC AND THE PRODUCTION OF FICTION

Despite the stimulation to the trade by the 1774 ruling, it is important to bear in mind that book production remained a costly venture. Fiction publication in particular was highly speculative and the risks were high: new novels were lengthy items that tended to be read a few times at best. Of all the material costs of producing a book, the most basic, paper, was the most expensive, constituting between a half and two thirds. During the period, paper was typically handmade from linen rags imported from the continent, and was therefore a costly commodity, particularly between 1797 and 1810 when the war with France hiked the mean price of paper by over 50 per cent. The process of printing itself had changed very little in the three centuries since the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in the late 1450s, relying on wooden hand presses to transfer an impression of inked type onto the page. The invention of the iron press by the Earl of Stanhope around 1800 improved productivity somewhat by speeding up the process of printing and improving clarity, but the setting of the type itself ("compositing") remained a time-consuming operation that required a skilled workforce. Owing to the high material cost of producing lengthy books such as novels, typical print runs for editions averaged around 500–750 copies, perhaps 1,000–1,500 for established novelists. If a novel's popularity led to demand for further editions, the text would have to be set afresh. Printing a novel during the period was laborious: it might take two pressmen working on a triple-decker of 960 pages two months to set and run off around 1,000 copies

(Garside *et al.* 2000: 2.39). As a result, the novel was an expensive product, something reflected by its price, which during the Regency was approximately 17s. 6d, equivalent to about half a week's wages for a skilled workman. Despite their costliness, however, few of these novels enjoyed longevity in a literary marketplace hungry for quantity and variety: just under 30 per cent of new titles published during the 1800s were deemed worthy of subsequent editions (Garside *et al.* 2004). Instead, the bulk comprised ephemeral, formulaic works by trade writers that were intended to fill the shelves of the circulating libraries in short shrift.

The story of literary property during the Romantic period is that of a gradual shift, post-1774, from the prerogatives of booksellers toward the ascendancy of the author, which culminates in the age of writers like Wordsworth and Scott:

At the same time as authors were becoming more overtly mercenary, there was also developing a more elevated idea of the author as artist or creator. The very concept of “originality,” in the sense of an “original work” of art or literature, is an eighteenth-century idea.

(Feather 1994: 79)

Despite this, authorship was hardly a profession for the mass of writers, who could barely eke out an income from writing. If they were hardy enough to enter the market, Romantic authors had at their disposal four different methods of securing publication: soliciting subscriptions from the public to cover the publication costs; covering the expenses of producing and advertising the book themselves, and paying the publisher a commission of around 10 per cent; sharing the costs and profits with publishers, typically on an equal “half-profits” basis; or (most commonly) selling the copyright to the publisher for a one-off fee, thus waiving a further stake in the book. Sale of copyright was by far the most common arrangement between authors and publishers, and it could yield significant sums to a popular novelist. Ann Radcliffe, for instance, sold the copyrights of her two most successful novels, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), for £500 and £800 respectively.

These are anomalous figures, however, and the typical fee for a copyright would have been in the region of £10 (which is the amount for which Austen sold the original version of *Northanger Abbey* in 1803). The majority of literary writers were amateurs or Grub Street hacks who were typically paid the lowest amount possible by publishers for their works. Longmans, for instance, bought the copyright in 1822 for Catherine Cuthbertson's successful *Romance of the Pyrenees* (1803), which had already gone into four editions, for £31.10s. Despite prolific output as a novelist, Eliza Parsons found herself a victim of circumstance early in her literary career, forced to appeal to the Royal Literary Fund in December 1792 for assistance:

I have finished Another Novel now in the Press, but Incapable of Soliciting Subscriptions in Person I fear my Advantages will be Very Small and at this time I am in the most alarming situation from the certainty of being draged [*sic*] to a prison Miserable Cripple as I am if I do not raise near Twenty Pounds by Christmas besides little wants that will Oppress me till next March.

(British Library, Loan 96 1/21/1)

As attested to by numerous case files in the archives of the Literary Fund, for every success story like Radcliffe's there remain hundreds of tales of woe and penury, of which Parsons's tale is merely a representative instance.

Following *Donaldson v. Becket*, the market for fiction began to grow quickly and responsively, as illustrated in Figure 14.1, which charts the output of new novels from 1780 to 1820. As the graph in Figure 14.1 makes clear, an exponential leap in production occurs in the imprint year 1788, rising from 51 new titles in 1787 to 80. A number of factors explain this rise: an emerging market for female authors and readers, coupled with the emergence of domestic sentimental fiction written by authors like Anna Maria Bennett, Mary Robinson and Charlotte Smith; increasing translations of continental works (which represented 15 per cent of the new novels published during the 1790s and 1800s); the proliferation of circulating libraries and the expansion of the newly formed publishing firms. This growth continued evenly, before a second surge in the mid-1790s, which lasted to the end of the decade. The majority of fictions published during the earlier part of the eighteenth century had been sentimental romances in the tradition of Richardson, Rousseau and Goethe. The history of the Romantic novel is, in many ways, the history of women's writing: between 1780 and 1820, the genre was indubitably associated with women, both as writers and as readers. As Figure 14.2 makes clear, female novelists outnumber male ones throughout the period, with the 1790s marking a crucial time during which female writers were leading innovations in the market (publishing 41.5 per cent of total output of new fiction, compared to 32 per cent by men).

In addition to the domestic sentimental novel, the 1790s saw the efflorescence of the Gothic, which went on to be a key fictional mode during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Since the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, and excepting a scattering of titles, Gothic failed to gain traction in significant

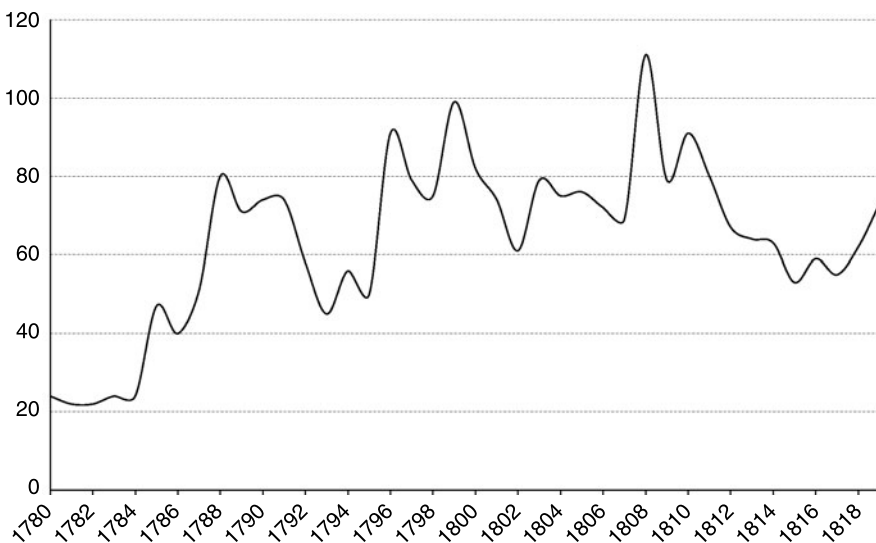


Figure 14.1 Production of new fiction, 1780–1820

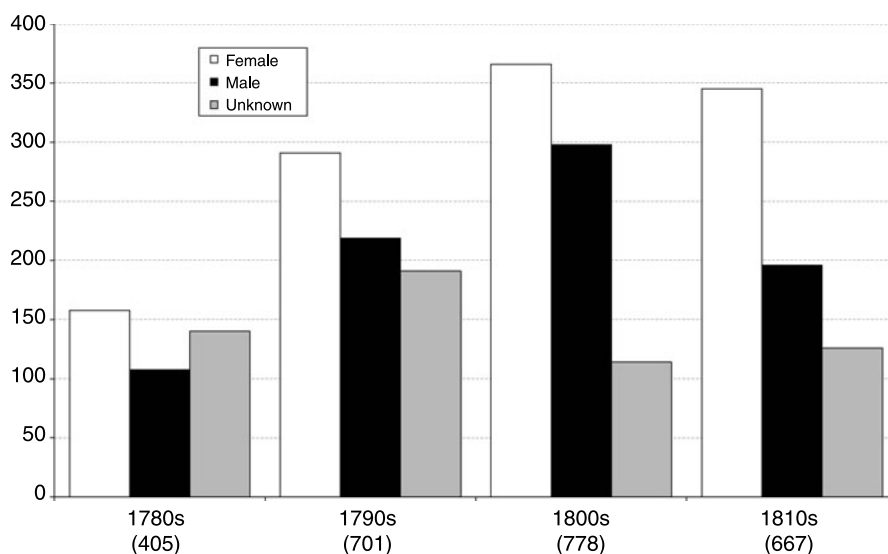


Figure 14.2 Authorship of new fiction by gender, 1780–1829

numbers until the late 1780s. The totemic figure of this era is Ann Radcliffe, whose prescient combination of vivid landscape description, melodramatic incident and complex psychological characterization established her as the so-called “Great Enchantress” of the age. After a low-key start with *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), Radcliffe’s successes with *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and most notably *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) popularized conventions which other writers were only too happy to follow. Gothicists such as Francis Lathom, Eliza Parsons and Regina Maria Roche (three of the “horrid” novelists whose titles Isabella enumerates to Catherine in *Northanger Abbey*) were among the most productive trade novelists of the period who borrowed heavily from Radcliffe. Lathom penned 21 novels between 1795 and 1830 (ten of which were Gothic), while Parsons wrote or translated 19 works from 1790 to 1807. Roche was seen by contemporaries as Radcliffe’s closest rival and her Irish Gothic *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) was one of the bestselling novels of the period. Around this time, the most prolific novelist of the Romantic era, “Mrs Meeke,” commenced her literary career, which saw the publication of 25 novels and six translations by the Minerva Press. Beginning in 1795 with *Count St Blancard, Or, The Prejudiced Judge* and concluding in 1823 with *What Shall Be, Shall Be*, Meeke was particularly attuned to the fashions of the novel market, embracing a variety of populist genres and styles. Not least of these was the Gothic, with Meeke writing such works as *The Abbey of Clugny* (1795), *The Mysterious Wife* (1796) and *Langhton Priory* (1809). And yet, despite such productivity, hardly anything is known about Meeke, who employed a complex suite of authorial personae, publishing anonymously, as “Mrs Meeke” and using the pseudonym “Gabrielli.”

Of course, the response to Radcliffe’s most successful novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), manifested itself most famously in Matthew Lewis’s masculine

riposte, *The Monk* (1796). A violent and pornographic *tour de force*, *The Monk* caused a general outcry in the literary establishment, which led to Lewis substantively censoring the fourth edition of 1798. Nevertheless, the novel galvanized the public appetite for “German mysteries” of a similar kind, leading to the appearance of titles such as Agnes Musgrave’s *Edmund of the Forest* (1797), *The New Monk* (1798) by “R.S.,” Mrs Showes’s *The Restless Matron* (1799) and Mr Lyttleton’s *The German Sorceress* (1803). Not only darkened by Gothic horrors, the close of the century was also cultured by political controversy in the wake of the French Revolution, which generated a number of polemical fictions by both radical writers and anti-Jacobin reactionaries. The philosopher William Godwin was able to merge Gothic machinery with radical politics in his *Things as They Are; Or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), a claustrophobic tale of persecuted innocence that explores the corruptions and despotism of contemporary Britain.

At this point, it is worth pausing to reflect on the status of the novel at this time, which according to the conservative propagandist Hannah More was “one of the most universal as well as most pernicious sources of corruption among us” (More 1799: 1.191), the circulating library a veritable “mart of mischief” (Roberts 1834: 3.313–14). More’s comments typify the dominant view of the novel as an often degrading, sometimes illicit form of literary effort, with one reviewer accusing “modern novelists” as those “who delight in palliating error, and in reconciling their readers to false and extravagant delineations of character and conduct” (Anon. 1801: 429–30). Novels were likened to “buzzing insects which [have] received a temporary life from the warmth of the circulating library” (Anon. 1788: 486), and anguished reviewers demanded “when will the dreary prospect be enlivened again by a work of real genius?” (Anon. 1791: 471). Gothic fictions, particularly at the turn of the century, did little to mitigate such views, and their increasingly “horrid” nature only exacerbated the hostility toward the novel. Nevertheless, the negative response hardly dented the production of fiction, which had found a receptive audience and a proliferation of writers willing to publish their works in abundance. William Lane’s Minerva Press, which became synonymous with Gothic potboilers during the period, singlehandedly generated new novels at almost industrial levels (publishing 674 new titles between 1780 and 1819 alone). A Victorian retrospect of the Romantic trade observed that Lane’s imprint

was noted for the number and variety of books, called novels, and distributed to all the circulating libraries in the country. From ten to twenty pounds were the sums usually paid to authors for those novels of three volumes. The Colburns and Bentleys drove this trash out of the market.

(Rees 1896: 87)

Despite such dismissals, a cursory examination of Minerva’s lists indicates how responsive the firm was to public tastes, crowded as they are with such chilling pleasures as *The Horrors of Oakendale Abbey* (1797), *More Ghosts!* (1798) and the appropriately titled *Minerva Castle* (1802). As Feather observes:

Lane’s publications came to typify Gothic fiction; indeed the “Minerva Press novel” became almost as much of a descriptor as “Mills and Boon” was to be of

popular romantic novels in the second half of the twentieth century. Lane was an entrepreneur, with an understanding of his market and the ability to turn a fashion into a profit.

(Feather 2006: 78)

Not only was Lane in a position to publish these trade Gothics, his “Minerva Library” on Leadenhall Street made his wares readily available to an entranced reading public.

Production of fiction continued through the turn of the century, as the appetite for novels continued unabated, with the decade as a whole witnessing a 10 per cent increase in production compared to the 1790s, particularly with the appearance of scandal novels of high life and formulaic Gothic fictions derived from Radcliffe and Lewis. Data provided by Lévy (1968) and Frank (1987) suggests that production of Gothic novels in the 1800s was between 21 and 40 per cent higher than in the 1790s; similarly, Garside *et al.* (2000: 2.56) supplies figures which indicate that a quarter of new novels appearing in the 1800s were identifiably Gothic (199 titles). There were novels that were innovative in their borrowings, such as Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya; Or, The Moor* (1806), which recasts the Lewisian antihero in the female guise of the beautiful, tempestuous and ultimately damned Victoria di Loredani. The majority, however, were hack works that made little attempt to disguise their derivative nature: representative examples include Edward Mortimer’s *Montoni; Or, The Confessions of the Monk of Saint Benedict* (1808), *Manfroné; Or, The One-Handed Monk* by “Mary Anne Radcliffe” (1809) and the delightfully composite *The Monk of Udolpho* (1807) by antiquarian T.J. Horsley Curties. The bibliographical record illustrated in Figure 14.2 reveals the 1800s as a period of roughly even gender distribution of authorship, in no small part the result of the market for Gothic fiction driven by Lewis’s male imitators. While the Minerva Press, from 1802 under the direction of Lane’s successor A.K. Newman, continued to purvey trade fictions, new firms flourished in an expanding and increasingly mercenary trade. A key instance here is James Fletcher Hughes, whose sharp practices generated a roll of scandal-mongering and Gothic titles second only to the Minerva Press during the 1800s, capturing nearly 10 per cent of the market for new fiction (see Garside 1987). While it enjoyed a highpoint in output, the novel of the 1800s was in many ways at its nadir in quality, typically comprising salacious works meant to titillate and feed the consumptive appetite of voracious readers. The accelerated production of the period sat awkwardly with the war of attrition being fought on the continent, and change was inevitable.

As the Regency began, a transformation can be discerned in attitudes toward the novel, registered by a shift toward a more domestic ideology that later became the quintessence of Victorian fiction. Religious, most notably evangelical, writers entered the genre with a purpose in mind: to tame the novel and to educate its middling-class and gentry readers, beginning in 1808 with Hannah More’s paean to the homely, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*. A different but equally powerful domestic inflection was introduced by the national fictions of Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) that engaged with the complicated relationship between Britain and Ireland in the wake of the 1801 Act of Union, offering complementary readings that can be seen as “rational” and “Romantic” respectively. The novel of the 1810s was being reformed as a vehicle that could articulate serious issues, but in a manner that

could be ideologically disentangled from the more fraught polemical associations of the Jacobin era. Productivity during the 1810s dropped considerably, constituting only 86 per cent of that during the 1800s, reined in by a confluence of particular factors, as I have argued elsewhere (Mandal 2007: 19–21). Among these were the economic impact of the Napoleonic wars, the consequences of which included huge rises in inflation, taxation and import duties, and a soaring national debt. Within the novel market itself, restraint became a byword, resulting from the imbrications of the economic climate, a fall in foreign translations (from 15 per cent in the 1800s to 5 per cent) and the serious turn in fiction that followed in the wake of evangelicism. This shift toward domesticity resulted in production of female-authored fiction which exceeded that of the 1790s, with women producing just over half of the new novels, compared to just under one third by men. In essence, while the 1810s signal a time when a mature literary marketplace was coming to terms with new priorities amidst the crucible of war, that market was still driven by women, who played a major role in “domesticating” the novel.

It was around this time that Sir Walter Scott made the transition from poetry to fiction, enjoying phenomenal success with his historical novels, which commenced in 1814 with *Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*. In many ways, Scott's fiction extends the turn toward the “domestic” that characterized evangelical and national tales, and can be understood in post-Waterloo terms as a celebration, as well as an attempted construction, of a reconciling Britishness that sublimates the contemporary disparities of the country (cultural, political, religious) within a unifying myth of historicized, homogeneous nationhood. In the opening chapter of *Waverley* itself, Scott satirizes the Gothic as a by-now moribund mode, drawing attention to its instantly recognizable (and therefore exhausted) mechanisms when metafictionally considering possible titles for his novel:

Had I, for example, announced in my frontispiece, “Waverley, a Tale of other Days,” must not every novel-reader have anticipated a castle scarce less than that of Udolpho, of which the eastern wing had been long uninhabited, and the keys either lost or consigned to the care of some aged butler or housekeeper, whose trembling steps, about the middle of the second volume, were doomed to guide the hero, or heroine, to the ruinous precincts? Would not the owl have shrieked and the cricket cried in my very title-page? . . . Again, had my title borne, “Waverley, a Romance from the German,” what head so obtuse as not to image forth a profligate abbot, an oppressive duke, a secret and mysterious association of Rosycrucians and illuminati, with all their properties of black cowls, caverns, daggers, electrical machines, trap-doors, and dark lanterns?

(Scott 2007: 3–4)

Scott's tongue-in-cheek dismissal is borne out by the fact that Gothic titles only comprised 13.4 per cent of new fiction in the 1810s. Despite this bottoming out, the Gothic managed to cling on for a while yet, as marked by a short resurgence of titles in the post-Waterloo period, with no fewer than 21 new titles (about 15 per cent) appearing with 1819–20 imprints. Following in the wake of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), a number of memorable novels signal the dying groans of the Romantic Gothic: C.R. Maturin's

Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) and James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), as well as parodic treatments like Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) and Jane Austen's posthumous *Northanger Abbey* (1818). And, despite his seeming resistance to the depredations of the Gothic, Scott was himself not averse to employing its apparatus when it suited him. Novels such as *The Antiquary* (1816) and *Redgauntlet* (1824) contain entertaining inset tales of the supernatural (respectively, "The Tale of Martin Waldeck" and "Wandering Willie's Tale"), which themselves enjoyed popularity as self-contained narratives and were regularly anthologized, while *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) is famously draped in doom-laden prophecies, family curses, madness, melodrama and eerie demises.

CONCLUSION

Scott's entry into the novel market signaled a key moment in its history, dramatically realigning the hitherto female-inflected nature of the genre, so that by the 1820s, male authors were responsible for over half of the new fiction published. Perhaps a result of a new-found respectability that emerged partly through the "domestication" of the novel and partly through Scott's "intervention," the genre was now a seemly rather than a subaltern literary form, and one whose commerciality could now be linked not with irresponsible fecundity but to a post-Waterloo professionalism. The 1820s recalibrated fiction as a masculine form with a bevy of historical novels inspired by Scott, alongside tales of military prowess and high society, in many ways paving the way for the next generation of career-novelists like Dickens and Thackeray, who would enjoy the fruits of the market even more than Scott. Nevertheless, central to these important years in the emergence and consolidation of the novel was the vital and formative role played by the nexus of women novelists and readers. They were able to use the genre to articulate a clear and variegated female perspective in a social environment dominated by the male view of things. In this context, the prominent role played by Gothic reflects the richness and variety of the novel market as one marked simultaneously by experimentation and imitation, aesthetic innovation and commercial exploitation. Despite fading away by the 1820s, the Gothic did not die altogether, instead manifesting in a variety of new configurations. Not least among these was its reanimation in the form of short stories, such as the infamous "Tales of Terror" popularized by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, but more particularly in the serializations that appeared in the increasingly popular family periodicals, which would themselves within a generation supersede the triple-decker as the main conduit for new fiction. But that is, of course, another story.

A NOTE ON STATISTICAL DATA

The data used to generate the two charts that accompany this essay, as well as many of the statistics provided in my discussion, draw upon research for two projects in which I was fortunate to be involved: the printed bibliography *The English Novel, 1770–1829* (Garside *et al.* 2000) and the online database *British Fiction, 1800–1829* (Garside *et al.* 2004).

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1788) *Critical Review*, 65: 486.
— (1791) *Critical Review*, new series 1: 471.
— (1801) *Monthly Review*, 2nd series 35: 429–30.
Austen, J. (2006) *Northanger Abbey*, 1818, eds B.M. Benedict and D. Le Faye, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Blakey, D. (1935) *The Minerva Press, 1790–1820*, London: The Bibliographical Society.
Deazley, R. (2004) *On the Origin of the Right to Copy: Charting the Movement of Copyright Law in Eighteenth-Century Britain (1695–1775)*, Portland, OR: Hart.
Eliot, S. (1994) *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919*, London: The Bibliographical Society.
Feather, J. (1985) *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
— (1994) *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, New York: Mansell.
— (2006) *A History of British Publishing*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.
Frank, F.S. (1987) *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel*, New York: Garland Publishing.
Garside, P.D. (1987) “J.F. Hughes and the Publication of Popular Fiction, 1803–10,” *The Library*, 9.3 240–58.
Garside, P.D., Raven, J. and Schöwerling, R. (eds) (2000) *The English Novel, 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, 2 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Garside, P. D., Belanger, J.E., Mandal, A.A. and Ragaz, S.A. (2004) *British Fiction, 1800–1830: A Database of Production, Circulation & Reception*, Cardiff: Cardiff University. Online. Available HTTP: <www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk> (accessed December 10, 2012).
Lackington, J. (1791) *Memoirs of the First Forty-Five Years of the Life of James Lackington*, London.
Lévy, M. (1968) *Le Roman “gothique” anglais 1764–1824*, Toulouse: Association des publications de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Toulouse.
Mandal, A.A. (2007) *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel: The Determined Author*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
More, H. (1799) *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 5th edn, 2 vols, London.
Rees, T. (1896) *Reminiscences of Literary London from 1779 to 1853*, with additions by J. Britton, New York.
Roberts, W. (1834) *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs Hannah More*, 2nd edn, 4 vols, London.
Scott, W. (2007) *Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, 1814, ed. P.D. Garside, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
St Clair, W. (2004) *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FURTHER READING

- Kelly, G. (1989) *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789–1830*, London: Longman. (A substantive account of the Romantic novel, examining both canonical and popular authors.)

- Maxwell, R. and Trumpener, K. (2008) *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A comprehensive collection of essays that traces the commercial and aesthetic developments of the novel.)
- Potter, F. (2005) *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835: Exhuming the Trade*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Considers the role of popular trade Gothics such as chapbooks and bluebooks that complemented mainstream circulating-library fictions.)
- Raven, J. (2007) *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450–1850*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (A thorough overview of British publishing history, particularly in its consideration of practices and patterns during the long eighteenth century.)
- Turner, C. (1992) *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century*, London: Routledge. (Examines the vital contribution made by women writers to the development of the novel, as well as discussing the commercial dynamics in which they operated.)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GOTHIC AND THE HISTORY OF
READING, 1764–1830

Katie Halsey

In 1815, William Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, wrote to John Murray, Jane Austen's publisher and the founder of the *Quarterly*, of his first encounter with Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813):

I have for the first time looked into *Pride and Prejudice*; and it is really a very pretty thing. No dark passages; no secret chambers; no wind-howlings in long galleries; no drops of blood upon a rusty dagger – things that should now be left to ladies' maids and sentimental washerwomen.

(Smiles 1891: 1.282)

As Gifford's comment suggests, the Gothic mode, by this date, was both ubiquitous and somewhat *déclassé*. Since the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, Gothic texts had enthralled thousands of readers, particularly in the Gothic heyday of the 1790s. They had also, not coincidentally, generated considerable critical debate as to how to define what the Gothic actually was, and about the aesthetic, moral and political value of the mode as well as some of the individual fictions that utilized it. Taking their cue from Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), writers such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie and James Beattie debated the relationships between terror, horror, the sublime and the imagination in relation to the Gothic in the 1770s and 1780s. In the 1790s, such discussions continued, but critics turned their attention to the moral dangers of the Gothic, and particularly to its perceived political dimensions and effects. In the polarized political conditions of the 1790s, Gothic novels were often associated with the ideas and principles of the French Revolution. Conservative journals such as the *Anti-Jacobin Review* characterized these fictions as politically dangerous, while radical political thinkers such as William Godwin embraced the potential of the Gothic, in particular in *Things as They Are: Or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794).

Responses to the Gothic of this period – by both critics and common readers alike – thus constitute a politicized discourse which exposes some of the most pressing anxieties and preoccupations of the period. Writing in a much-expanded

print marketplace (see Chapter 14 in this volume), reviewers and other critics gave voice to fears that an emerging readership of the newly-literate working classes would be seduced and corrupted by Gothic novels. “Happy would it be, for the welfare of the present generation, if those ridiculous fabrications, of weak minds and often depraved hearts, which constitute the enchantment of circulating libraries, could be entirely annihilated,” wrote the Rev. F. Prevost and F. Blagdon, in their introduction to the 1801–2 *Flowers of Literature* anthology (Prevost and Blagdon 1803: 1). Others feared that revolutionary ideas would be disseminated, insidiously smuggled into novels and plays, and that “traditional” British ideals and loyalties would be subverted and undermined by an invasion of foreign sentiments. Defenders of the Gothic, on the other hand, argued for its native Englishness (often citing Shakespeare or Milton to make their arguments), but more commonly, Gothic novels, romances, plays and poetry were troped as dangerous foreign imports that threatened British social and political stability.

In her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), for example, Hannah More inveighs against “the irruption of those swarms of publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with other and more fatal arms, are overrunning civilized society” (More 1801: 1.41–42). As More continues,

Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of “chaos and old night,” by distorted and unprincipled compositions, which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot.

(More 1801: 1.41–42)

German Gothic plays are thus figured with strong negative connotations as Huns and Vandals, likened to swarming insects (ants, bees, wasps), set against the Greek and Roman classics that a “purer taste” would enjoy. More envisages the women to whom her *Strictures* are primarily addressed as being locked in a constant spiritual struggle against evil. But such women are also, in her thinking, an important part of the nation’s struggle to retain British Christian traditions in the face of free-thinking and Jacobin ideas, values which, “deprived of the assistance of the French press,” are “now attempting to attain their object under the close and more artificial veil of German literature” (More 1801: 1.44). More thus conceptualizes the reading of women as a weapon in a very real ideological war, a war linked in her mind, as in that of so many conservative thinkers of the 1790s, with the possibility of a physical war against the French. Reading is thus a strategically key activity in a political context of considerable flux and tension; the “patriotism at once firm and feminine” (More 1801: 1.6) that she advocates depends on refusing to read the Gothic texts through which “the modern apostles of infidelity and immorality” can disperse their “pernicious doctrines” (More 1801: 1.45). Readers, she insists, should instead turn back to trusted British authors, such as Shakespeare, Milton and Richardson, for only then can their mental purity be assured and the safety of the nation be secured. Like More, in 1802, William Wordsworth blamed the “almost savage torpor” of the

minds of the British people on the fact that “the invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespear [*sic*] and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse” (Wordsworth, 1992: 249). For Wordsworth, too, the remedy was a change in reading tastes and habits; he hoped that his own poetry would “counteract” the “degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation,” and encourage the British public to value the principles of strength and simplicity in both language and life (Wordsworth 1992: 249–50).

By 1815, however, such debates, like the texts that provoked them, were beginning to seem outdated, and the prevailing opinion became the class-based criticism articulated by Gifford above. Readers of the gentry, professional and aristocratic classes, he implies in the statement with which I began this chapter, should no longer find the dark tropes of the Gothic appealing; such things should be left to the women of the laboring classes. Under Gifford’s editorship, the *Quarterly Review* (founded in 1809) set itself up as the arbiter of the literary and moral tastes of the gentry and professional classes, and the assumptions about gender, class and taste in this brief statement neatly reveal the ways in which discussions of the Gothic had come to stand for something else in the writing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As both Gifford and More illustrate, discussions about reading Gothic texts in this period were rarely, if ever, only about reading the Gothic. As Maria and R.L. Edgeworth write in their *Practical Education* (1798), “Formerly it was wisely said, ‘Tell me what company a man keeps, and I will tell you what he is’; but since literature has spread a new influence over the world, we must add, ‘Tell me what company a man keeps, and what books he has read, and I will tell you what he is’” (Edgeworth and Edgeworth 1801: 2.183). Because literary taste denotes character, in other words, judgments about what others are reading are always also implicit judgments of their morality, politics, patriotism and taste. And the knowledge of how one’s reading taste might appear to others thus influences readers’ recorded responses to the texts they read. Any reader encountering Gothic texts at the beginning of the nineteenth century could hardly fail to be aware of the books’ controversial status, and their reactions are cultured accordingly. Such judgments coalesce here around the Gothic mode, but many of the ideological objections to the Gothic’s excesses resurface in discussions of all kinds of imaginative literature. Objections to the older form of the (Gothic-associated) romance thus bleed into assessments of the new form of the novel, and novel-readers and romance readers tend to be conflated in the many discussions of readership that appeared at the turn of the century. The critical discourse surrounding the Gothic therefore plays an important role in both the perception of the novel and the history of reading in this period.

It is precisely the conflation of romance and novel to which Jane Austen objects in the famous defense of the novel in *Northanger Abbey* (1818), a work which itself joyfully and parodically revels in the trappings of Gothic convention. Written in the late 1790s, finished in 1799, revised and accepted for publication in 1803, but not published until after Austen’s death in December 1817 (though the title page read 1818), *Northanger Abbey* reveals many of the assumptions and prejudices about reading the Gothic romance that are also articulated in the social and cultural criticism of the period. The stereotypical reader of the Gothic in such criticism is young, female, credulous and hence vulnerable to corruption. Such a reader is

dangerously transported by her imagination, and begins to believe that what she reads is real. As Louis-Antoine Caraccioli put it in his *Advice from a Lady of Quality* (1769), reading romances leads women into a tendency to “adopt the language of self-importance and affectation, and become [them]selves the heroines of romance” (Caraccioli 1786: 163), while the Edgeworths claimed that women who read too much would start to act “in imitation of some Jemima or Almeria, who never existed” (Edgeworth and Edgeworth 1801: 2.51). Over-stimulation of the passions by fiction will render women unfit for daily life: “common food is insipid to the taste which has been vitiated by the high seasonings of art” (Edgeworth and Edgeworth 1801: 2.52). The stereotypical reader of the Gothic that is conjured up in these and other such contemporary assessments is also thought, in her reading of romances, to waste time that ought to be employed in more productive endeavors such as sewing, housewifery, child-rearing or self-improvement. John Bennett suggests, indeed, that “the romantick turn they create indisposes for every thing that is *rational* or substantial. They corrupt all *principle* . . . Such false, over-strained ideas have led many a poor girl to *ruin*” (Bennett 1798: 2.71). These assumptions and prejudices appear in visual form in Gillray’s famous caricature, *Tales of Wonder* (Figure 15.1), in which four idle women are represented huddled around a candle, open-mouthed and spellbound, as one of them reads from “Monk” Lewis’s *Tales of Wonder* (1801). The women are clearly enjoyably transported by their imaginations, lost to all sense of duty as they give themselves over to the seductive horrors and pleasures of Lewis’s text.



Figure 15.1 “*Tales of wonder!*” by James Gillray

In Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe "shut themselves up . . . together" to read a series of Gothic romances, which are, Isabella assures Catherine, "all horrid" (Austen 2006: 30, 33). As the novel progresses, it is clear that Catherine has read far too many of these works, for her worldview is unhelpfully distorted by her romance-fed Gothic expectations. Led into a series of misconceptions by her reading – abbeys must be haunted, locked chests must contain secret manuscripts, dead mothers must have been murdered, to name only three of her mistaken presumptions – Catherine eventually learns that the Gothic is no guide to real life:

The visions of romance were over . . . Charming as were all Mrs Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for.

(Austen 2006: 204–5)

The novel's comedy turns on its extended parody of the naïve romance-reader, a figure bequeathed to Austen by Cervantes, and passed down through the female-Quixote novels of the eighteenth century, but the fact that Catherine Morland is an avid reader of *Gothic* romances locates the novel very precisely in its historical moment. By making Catherine a connoisseur of the "horrid," Austen makes her also a fashionable reader, one who participates in a vogue for a mode that was strongly associated with young women. Catherine knows that her reading choices are looked down upon by authority figures – "gentlemen read better books," she tells Henry Tilney – but she still prefers Gothic romances to the socially-sanctioned "real solemn history" (Austen 2006: 107, 109). Like her more famous predecessor, Don Quixote, Catherine begins as a reader whose imagination leads her astray, but she eventually learns to distinguish romance from reality, remaining, in the end, essentially unharmed by her Gothic imagination. *Northanger Abbey* thus partially validates and partially critiques stereotypical notions of the young female reader's vulnerability to the dangers of Gothic fiction.

A consideration of the somewhat complicated composition and publication history of *Northanger Abbey* is helpful in tracking the rise and fall of the popularity of the Gothic mode itself. Austen's fiction, originally titled "Susan," was sold to Benjamin Crosby in 1803, in the hope of a quick publication. Crosby failed to publish it, and Austen unsuccessfully attempted to buy back the manuscript in 1809. In 1816, she succeeded in re-purchasing the manuscript, revised it, and wrote an "Advertisement," in which she apologized for "those parts of the work which thirteen years have made comparatively obsolete," and asked the public to "bear in mind that thirteen years have passed since it was finished, many more since it was begun, and that during that period, places, manners, books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes" (Austen, 2006: 1). The "Advertisement" reveals a justifiable nervousness. Much of *Northanger Abbey*'s comedy depends for its effect on an extended parody of Gothic tropes and Gothic readers. But Austen, who was always acutely sensitive to literary trends, knew that in the years since 1799, Gothic texts, though once all the rage, had become somewhat outmoded; by 1816, they were objects of derision rather than desire. Even a parody of the Gothic was

less fresh and original than it would have been in 1803; by 1816 a number of Gothic parodies, including William Beckford's *Azemia* (1797) and Eaton Stannard Barrett's female-quixote novel *The Heroine* (1813), had been published. Austen had read *The Heroine* in 1814, calling it "a delightful burlesque, particularly on the Radcliffe style" in a letter of March 2–3, 1814 (Le Faye 1995: 256). *Northanger Abbey* must hence have felt to her like a rather risky endeavor in a marketplace that was just beginning to value the verisimilitude of her own later novels. Austen knew that public taste had shifted decisively: in 1816, readers no longer hungered (or at least not openly) for Ann Radcliffe, but instead for the new Waverley novels of Sir Walter Scott.

Catherine Morland is, though, the fictional counterpart of many real-life readers of the 1790s – Jane Austen among them – who were acutely aware of the ways in which their reading matter was scrutinized and judged, particularly when they read Gothic texts. Reading Matthew Lewis's controversial bestseller, *The Monk* (1796) on the evening of May 25, 1798, Elizabeth Gurney (later Elizabeth Fry), reflected:

This evening I have been reading a good deal in the "Monk". I don't know whether it hurts the mind or not, it certainly shows the passions in a very fascinating light. I think we are more apt to be impressed with that part than the morality of it. I think it loss of time and . . . I should not go on reading it, but yet as I have begun it I think it better to go on.

(Fry 1798: 22)

Gurney had obviously read at least some of the controversy over Lewis's book, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's review of *The Monk*, published in the *Critical Review* of February 1797. There, Coleridge had declared it to be "a romance, which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale" (Coleridge 1797: 197), while T.J. Mathias had likened it to a gangrenous growth in the life-organs of the body politic in his *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–97: 4.ii-v). An anonymous contributor to the *Monthly Mirror*, in contrast, defended *The Monk* on the grounds of the moral excellence of the work (Anon. 1797: 210–15). Gurney here conscientiously attempts to analyze whether or not reading *The Monk* has corrupted her mind, but concludes that she simply does not know. Her response implicitly responds, too, to the "timewasting" criticisms leveled at the readers of Gothic novels, recognizing that she "should not" continue to read, but deciding that she will do so anyway, a decision that bears tribute to the work's compulsive appeal. Another reader, Robert Southey, read *The Monk* in August of 1796, by which time it had already become a word-of-mouth success. Although the *Monk* controversy had not yet kicked off by the time of his reading, Southey's response, like Gurney's, is already wary, suggesting his familiarity with criticisms of Gothic's readers:

I have now read the Monk – & admire the delicacy of Lewis in criticising the Bible. [T]here is genius in the book – but no good can possibly be produced by it. I would not have men distrust themselves.

(Southey 1796: Letter 171)

Southey's reaction to *The Monk* – “no good can possibly be produced by it” – articulates a near-ubiquitous concern with the effects of fiction on its readers, and pre-empts the criticisms that Coleridge would make in his 1797 review of *The Monk* for the *Critical Review*: “Tales of enchantment and witchcraft can never be *useful*: our author has contrived to make them *pernicious*” (Coleridge 1797: 198). Coleridge and Southey both refer here, of course, to the widespread eighteenth-century dictum, originating with Horace, that the purpose of fiction was to be both useful and entertaining. They hence deny the legitimacy of Gothic fiction through their separate assertions that it is not morally useful.

Concerns about the wasting of time on the reading of works that do not directly inculcate morality resurface frequently in readers' responses to Gothic texts. In 1794, Anna Seward wrote to her friend Christopher Smyth:

I read not, neither doubtless do you, the Novel trash of the day. Hours are too precious for such frivolous waste . . . yet there are a few pens which possess the power so to inspirit those fond fancies of the brain, as to render them gratifying to an imagination which demands more to please it than amorous story. Mrs Radcliffe's pen is of this number. Though she aims not at the highly important morality of the great Richardson, nor possesses scarce a portion of his ample, his matchless ability, in discriminating characters,
“Yet does she mount, and keep her distant way
Above the limits of the vulgar page.”

(Seward 1811: 3.389)

Seward goes on to characterize Radcliffe's as “the hand of Genius,” but she can only do so once she has distanced herself from the frivolous readers of novelistic trash, and acknowledged that she is not making this claim on the basis of Radcliffe's morality. Instead, she focuses on Radcliffe's power over the reader's “imagination,” commenting on her “powers of scenic description” and her “great fort [*sic*] in displaying terrific images” (Seward 1811: 3.389–90). But it was not only female readers who recognized that they might be criticized for wasting time reading Gothic texts; in a diary entry of January 19, 1803, the bookseller's assistant John Upcott recorded that “The evening until one was frittered away in reading the ‘Monk’ for the fourth time at least,” although he adds that the second volume contains “some beautiful lines that often delights [*sic*] one” (Upcott 1803–7: 7).

It is noticeable how often readers of Lewis's notorious fiction consumed the text alone, in private and in the dead of night. As Dale Townshend argues, the darkness and privacy of the scene of Gothic reading conjured up in so many contemporary responses served to construct it as an unproductive, clandestine activity, akin in some ways to the solitary vice of Onanism (Townshend 2007: 241). Like John Upcott, the composer John Marsh, in October 1797, recorded beginning to read *The Monk* “in the course of [the] evening” (Marsh 1998: 655). Sometime between 1813 and 1816, the apprentice ship-builder Christopher Thomson read *The Monk* “after the family had retired for the night.” He continues with a tribute to the work's powers to thrill: “On rising from my seat to go to bed, I was so impressed with dongeon [*sic*] horror, that I took the candle and stole up stairs, not daring to look either right or left, lest some Lady Angela should plunge a dagger into me!” (Thomson

1847: 67). Although Thomas Carlyle thought it “the most stupid & villainous novel that I have read for a great while,” he still, in 1817, “sat up till four o’clock, reading Matthew Lewis’s ‘Monk’” (Carlyle and Carlyle 1970: 1.109). And Claire Clairmont noted in her journal for 1814 that she, too, “s[a]t up till one reading the Monk” (Clairmont 1968: 45). No doubt many readers enjoyed the pleasures of scaring themselves in the dark, but solitary nighttime readings also suggest a desire not to be observed wasting the profitable hours of daylight. The verbs and adverbs chosen to describe the act of reading Gothic fictions in documented responses of the period also reveal the extent to which actual readers of the Gothic, particularly by the 1800s, but even in the 1790s, attempted to distance themselves from the stereotypes. “To amuse me,” John Marsh wrote on a wet day in Ramsgate in 1797, “I got the 2 last vols of the ‘Mysteries of Udolpho’ . . . from the library” (Marsh 1998: 651). Lord Byron described himself as reading “desultorily” in December of 1813, when he concluded in his journal that *The Monk* constituted “the philtred ideas of a jaded voluptuary” (Byron 1974: 3.234). Such readers – amused, desultory, detached – are certainly not the absorbed and addicted readers of the Gothic that conservative commentators liked to represent. Very few readers who bothered to record their encounters with Gothic texts (and many, of course, did not) did so without a slightly ironic tone (*vide* Thomson’s exclamation mark in his account of the “dungeon horror” [*sic*] that possessed him). Readers of the Gothic, in other words, knew how they were perceived by some of the mode’s vehement detractors. The records of their textual encounters therefore usually reveal the knowledge that theirs was somewhat of a shameful pleasure.

Nonetheless, some readers openly avowed their delight in reading the Gothic, just as some reviewers willingly defended the genius and extraordinary powers of a number of Gothic writers, including Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Elizabeth Carter even wished that Horace Walpole would eschew history in favor of writing more Gothic romances, commenting to Elizabeth Vesey in March 1768:

I fancy you were not greatly edified by the study of Mr Walpole’s book [probably Walpole’s *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III*]. There is always some degree of entertainment in what he writes, but less I think in this than usual, and it is rather more peevish and flippant. It is a great pity he should ever write any thing but Castles of Otranto, in which species of composition he is so remarkably happy.

(Carter 1809: 3.331)

The schoolboy Joseph Hunter recorded his reading of Ann Radcliffe’s novels in 1797 with pleasure, judging her to be “the best writer in her way of anybody I heard of.” Writing of *The Italian* (1797), he remarked, “There is one scene in this volume which cannot be easily equalled. I mean the scene . . . in the passage when they are going to murder Helena [*sic*] the heroine of the story” (Hunter 1797–99: 5). Thomas Green would have concurred with this judgment, writing in his diary of 1797: “In the vivid exhibition of the picturesque of nature, in the delineation of strong and dark character, in the excitation of horror by physical and moral agency, I know not that Mrs R. has any equal” (Green 1810: 28). As late as 1831, on re-reading *The*

Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), the work with which Catherine Morland is so obsessed in *Northanger Abbey*, Elizabeth Barrett (later Barrett Browning) declared herself to be “a worshipper of Mrs Radcliffe,” having first read *Udolpho* as a young girl (Barrett 1974: 104).

Joseph Hunter and Elizabeth Barrett were two of many children who beguiled their leisure hours with the works of Ann Radcliffe and her ilk. Gothic readers were often, in fact, young readers – to that extent, the stereotypes of romance readers in the popular consciousness were true – but the idea that young readers could not respond critically to the Gothic was patently false. Betsey Wynne’s response to William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786) – “Mama read the beginning of ‘Wateck’ to us. I fell asleep” – is a salutary reminder that the Gothic mode sometimes failed to thrill (Wynne 1935: 1.82). In fact, a number of readers of all ages record a sense of disappointment, or anticlimax, on reading Gothic texts. In 1797, Thomas Green found that *The Castle of Otranto* “grievously disappointed my expectations,” although he did enjoy Walpole’s Gothic tragedy *The Mysterious Mother* of 1768 (Green 1810: 23, 43). And Thomas De Quincey’s daughter, Margaret, recorded her sense of indignation at the climax of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: “What I mean is, if you have ever read it, such a case as occurs in the ‘Mysteries of Udolpho’ where your disgust is beyond all expression on finding that all your fright about the ghostly creature that has haunted you throughout the volumes has been caused by a pitiful wax image!” (Bonner 1936: 22). Thomas Carlyle also recorded his indifference to *The Monk*: “Considerable portions of it are grossly indecent[,] not to say brutish – one does not care a straw about one of the characters – and tho’ ‘little Mat’ has legions of ghosts & devils at his bidding – one views their movements with profound indifference” (Carlyle and Carlyle 1970: 1.109).

In these and other such responses, it is possible to glimpse a sense of readers defining their own (refined) taste through a rejection of the Gothic. But readers did not always outgrow their taste for the mode. Thomas Medwin described Percy Bysshe Shelley’s reading as a young boy (aged eleven) at Sion House School in 1803 as follows:

Anne Ratcliffe’s [*sic*] works pleased him most, particularly the *Italian*, but the Rosa-Matilda school, especially a strange, wild romance, entitled *Zofloya, or The Moor*, a Monk-Lewis production, where his Satanic Majesty, as in Faust, plays the chief part, enraptured him. The two novels he afterwards wrote, entitled *Zastrozzi* and *The Rosicrucian*, were modelled after this ghastly production, all of which I now remember, is, that the principal character is an incarnation of the devil, but who, unlike the *Monk*, (then a prohibited book, but afterwards an especial favourite with Shelley) instead of tempting a man and turning him into a likeness of himself, enters into a woman called Olympia, who poisons her husband homoeopathically, and ends by being carried off very melodramatically in blue flames to the place of dolor.

(Medwin 1847: 1.30–31)

Medwin claimed that the “constant dwelling on the marvellous” of his childhood years had “considerable influence on Shelley’s imagination,” adducing examples from Shelley’s later poems to make his point (Medwin 1847: 1.32–33). It is certainly

true that Shelley did not reject the Gothic as an adult, and that Gothic tropes resurfaced in his writing in later years, appearing in works such as *The Cenci*, written in 1819. When Shelley met Mary Godwin and her stepsister, Claire Clairmont, in 1812, he introduced the girls to Gothic fiction, and in the years that followed, while the three lived together in London and travelled together on the Continent, both young women read widely in the genre. Both Mary and Claire kept journals of those years and, reading their diary entries, it is tempting to imagine Mary Godwin and Claire Clairmont as real-life versions of Austen's Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe, shutting themselves up together to steep themselves in the thrills of Gothic fiction; in reality, of course, it seems that the relationship between the two girls was not always a comfortable one, characterized, as it was, by moodiness on both sides, and occasional sexual rivalry. The journals document their lives tersely, with an often-frustrating lack of detail, but their reading, like that of P.B. Shelley, is recorded meticulously.

"S. reads rights of Man. C. in an ill humour – she reads the Italian" (Shelley 1987: 1.48). This journal entry for November 26, 1814 is typical of Mary Shelley's journal. Between 1814 and Shelley's death in 1822, the reading of the three included – alongside extensive reading in the classics, German, French and Italian works, universally approved writers such as Shakespeare, Dante and Richardson, and revolutionary writers such as Tom Paine, Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Voltaire and Rousseau – a considerable number of Gothic novels, plays and poems. It is clear that books were shared around, and often read aloud within the small family circle. Claire Clairmont records readings of at least thirty Gothic or semi-Gothic texts, including Radcliffe's *The Italian*, M.G. Lewis's *The Monk*, and his *Tales of Wonder* and *Tales of Delight*; Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Shelley's *Zastrozzi* (1810), Mary-Anne Radcliffe's *Manfrone* (1809), Veit Weber's *The Sorcerer* (1795), Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778), S.T. Coleridge's "Christabel" (1816), Schiller's *The Ghost-Seer* (1787–89) and Edward Du Bois's parodic version of William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799), *St Godwin, A Tale of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (1800), read aloud by Percy and judged by Claire to be "terrible nonsense" (Clairmont 1968: 48 and *passim*). She also recorded reading a number of older romances, such as Baron de la Motte-Fouqué's *Sintram and his Companions* (1715) (Clairmont 1968: 202). Mary's records of both P.B. Shelley's and her own reading include a similarly large number of Gothic fictions and old romances, including those mentioned above by Claire, but also Beckford's *Vathek*, Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* (which Shelley read aloud to both Mary and Claire on October 5, 1814), Charles Maturin's *Fatal Revenge* (1807), Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon* (1816), and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18), Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline* (1788), M.G. Lewis's "The Anaconda" (1808), Godwin's *St Leon*, and many others (Shelley, 1987: *passim*). It is perhaps no wonder that Mary Shelley's first effort at imaginative fiction should have been the Gothic *Frankenstein*, written in the summer of 1816; authors are readers, too. As Simon Eliot argues, "the reading of books . . . represents a very complex feedback loop which partly determines the way in which text is written, manufactured, sold, bought, borrowed – and read" (Eliot 1994).

Both readers and authors are also agents in the marketplace. The rise and fall of the first wave of Gothic fiction took place against a backdrop of almost unprecedented changes to the publishing industry and the literary marketplace. For a series of reasons – among them the changes to the copyright laws detailed in Chapter 14 of this volume, the developments in education and literacy of the late eighteenth century, the technological developments of the industrial revolution, including those of the printing industry, and the improvements in transport brought about by new road and canal systems – the period between 1764 and 1830 was particularly fruitful for the production and dissemination of printed matter. Readers were faced with greater choice than ever before, while authors needed to write for a far larger and more disparate readership than the coterie of previous eras could have imagined. The relationship between Gothic and the history of reading is therefore a close, but a complex one. The Gothic was, as Rictor Norton argues, the first truly popular mode (Norton 2000: vii). But its popularity would eventually prove to be its downfall, as the readers of the Regency period became first satiated with Gothic romances and then disgusted by them, and turned instead to the more domesticated forms of the emerging realist novel. Nonetheless, the reputation of the Gothic and the reputation of the novel could not be so easily separated. As we have seen, readers do not respond only to the texts that they are reading. Cultural perceptions of a work, including perceptions relating to its genre, have an impact on the reading experience too. Perhaps the most lasting legacy of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel – and its most important role in the history of reading – is in fact the suspicion of the form of the novel that it bred, and for which it served as a useful cultural synecdoche, a suspicion which lasted long into the nineteenth century and beyond. Indeed, the novel's cultural validity remained in question throughout the nineteenth century, coloring the experiences of even those readers who had never encountered the Gothic texts themselves. As so many eighteenth-century Gothic novelists pointed out to their readers, old sins cast long shadows, and the crimes of the Gothic fathers are inevitably to be visited on their novelistic children unto the third and fourth generations.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1797) "A Friend to Genius," *Monthly Mirror*, 3: 210–15.
- Austen, J. (2006) *Northanger Abbey*, 1818, eds B.M. Benedict and D. Le Faye, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barrett, E. (1974) *The Barretts at Hope End: The Early Diary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. E. Berridge, London: John Murray.
- Bonner, W.H. (1936) *De Quincey at Work*, Buffalo, NY: Airport Publishers.
- Byron, G.G. (1974) *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. L.A. Marchand, 13 vols, London: John Murray.
- Carter, E. (1809) *A Series of Letters Between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, ed. M. Pennington, 4 vols, London.
- Caraccioli, L-A. (1786) *Advice From a Lady of Quality to her Children*, 1769, trans. S. Glasse, 4th edn, Gloucester: R. Raikes.
- Carlyle, T. and Carlyle, J. (1970) *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. C.R. Sanders et al., 40 vols, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Clairmont, C. (1968) *The Journals of Claire Clairmont*, ed. M.K. Stocking, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Coleridge, S.T. (1797) "Lewis's Romance of the Monk," *Critical Review*, 19, pp. 194–98.
- Edgeworth, M. and Edgeworth, R.L. (1801) *Practical Education*, 1798, 3 vols, 2nd edn, London: J. Johnson.
- Eliot, S. (1994) "The Reading Experience Database; Or, What Are We To Do About the History of Reading?" Online: Available HTTP: <<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/redback.htm>> (accessed January 2, 2013).
- Le Faye, D. (ed.) (1995) *Jane Austen's Letters*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fry, E. (1798). *Journal*, British Library, ADD MSS 47456, London.
- Green, T. (1810) *Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature*, Ipswich: John Raw.
- Hunter, J. (1797–99) *Journal of Joseph Hunter 1797–1799*, British Library, ADD MSS 24879, London.
- Mathias, T.J. (1794–97) *Pursuits of Literature; Or, What You Will*, 4 vols, 3rd edn, London: T. Becket.
- Marsh, J. (1998) *The Journals of John Marsh*, ed. B. Robins. Stuyvesant, NJ: Pendragon Press.
- Medwin, T. (1847) *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols, London: T.C. Newby.
- More, H. (1801) *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799, 2 vols, 9th edn, London: T. Cadell and W. Davies.
- Norton, R. (ed.) (2000) *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764–1840*, York: Leicester University Press.
- Prevost, F. and Blagdon, F. (eds) (1803) *Flowers of Literature*, London: B. Crosby.
- Seward, A. (1811) *Letters of Anna Seward*, 6 vols, Edinburgh: George Ramsay.
- Shelley, M. (1987) *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, eds P. Feldman and D. Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Southey, R. (1796) Letter to Horace Walpole Bedford, in *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey*, Romantic Circles Electronic Edition, Letter 171. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters> (accessed January 2, 2013).
- Smiles, S. (1891) *A Publisher and His Friends*, 2 vols, London: John Murray.
- Thomson, C. (1847) *Autobiography of an Artisan*, London: J. Chapman.
- Townshend, D. (2007) *The Orders of Gothic: Foucault, Lacan, and the Subject of Gothic Writing, 1764–1820*, New York: AMS Press.
- Upcott, J. (1803–7) *Diary, 1803–7*, British Library, ADD MSS 32558. London.
- Wordsworth, W. (1992) "Preface," *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) (eds) R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones, London: Routledge.
- Wynne, E. (1935) *The Wynne Diaries*, ed. A. Fremantle, 3 vols, London: [n.p.].

FURTHER READING

- Altick, R. (1957) *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (The first major attempt to map the reading of the mass reading public).
- Crone, R., Halsey, K., Owens, W.R. and Towheed, S. (eds) (2011) *The History of Reading*, 3 vols, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Edited collection which outlines the main methodological issues in the field of the history of reading and presents numerous case studies).

- Darnton, R. (1990) *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History*, New York: Norton (Defines and discusses the history of reading in the eighteenth century and its relationship to book history more broadly).
- Raven, J., Small, H. and Tadmor, N. (eds) (1996) *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Seminal collection of essays that presents a number of case studies).
- St Clair, W. (2004) *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Examines the book industry and construction of the reading nation in the Romantic period; includes helpful sections on copyright law).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

GOTHIC ADAPTATION,
1764–1830

—♦—

Diane Long Hoeveler

Although the Gothic has largely figured as a fictional genre, its cultural and literary manifestations extended into the poetic, dramatic and operatic fields. There were more than 1,000 Gothic novels and chapbooks written in England between 1764–1830, a large number of which attempted to defend the increasingly serious threats posed against the monarchy and aristocracy more generally in England. The Gothic originally began as an ideologically conservative genre committed to shoring up the claims of primogeniture and inheritance by entail. Novels such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778) were concerned with unjust tyrants, imprisonments, escapes, disinheritances, wrongful claims on an estate, threatened assaults on virginal females, and the eventual triumph of the "true" aristocrat as rightful heir. Increasingly, however, the Gothic developed a middle-class and whiggish ideology that was rabidly Protestant and nationalistic. This chapter will survey the various forms that Gothic novels have taken as they have been adapted for different audiences and for different ideological purposes.

GOTHIC CHAPBOOKS

Gothic bluebooks and chapbooks have been something of the step-child of Gothic scholarship, most frequently ignored because of their derivative nature, as well as the charge that they lack artistic sophistication, depth or significance (Varma 1957; Frank 1987; Watt 1932). Montague Summers claims that they were the reading material of "schoolboys, prentices, servant-girls, by the whole of that vast population which longed to be in the fashion, to steep themselves in the Gothic Romance." They are, in fact, commonly referred to as "the remainder trade" or "the trade Gothic" (Summers 1938: 84–85). More recently, William St Clair has claimed that, in fact, the chapbooks were read by

adults in the country areas, and young people in both the town and the country. It would be a mistake, therefore, to regard the ancient popular print as confined to those whose education fitted them for nothing longer or textually more

difficult. Many readers, whether adults or children, lived at the boundary between the reading and the non-reading nations. They were the marginal reading constituency whose numbers fell when prices rose and rose when prices fell.

(St Clair 2004: 343–44)

Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) and the novels of Ann Radcliffe produced by far the majority of the imaginative content of Gothic chapbooks. Lewis's novel was so sprawling that there were at least three separate tales within it, each of which could be focused on as the content for an entire chapbook. The first and perhaps the most popular excerpt from the novel concerned the tale of the "Bleeding Nun," derived from Germanic sources and adapted by Lewis to supplement the story of Raymond and Agnes, the pregnant nun held captive below the Convent of St Clare. This source-tale frequently appeared in a variety of dramatic adaptations, in operettas, and even in paper dolls that were sold to amuse children (Hoeveler 2010b). But while the emphasis in the bleeding nun tale appears to be horror and the fear of the dead walking, the story also relies on the familiar tropes of the profligate nun, the unchaste and undead Sister who continues to seek out male victims for her insatiable lust, much like a proto-vampire. The Preface to *The Castle of Lindenberg; Or The History of Raymond & Agnes, a Romance* (1799), one of the many chapbook adaptations of *The Monk*, states its anti-Catholic agenda quite clearly:

The subject of the following pages is founded on those remoter days of our ancestors when, blinded by superstitions, they sacrificed their dearest interest to the will of monastic fanatics who, under the pretense of religion, committed the most cruel actions; and with a zeal, deaf to all those tender feelings which distinguished a true Christian, let fall their revenge on all those who were so unfortunate as to deviate from the path they had drawn out for them to pursue.

(Anon. 1799: 1)

One of the most typical of chapbook adaptations of *The Monk* is *Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins; Or, The Crimes of Cloisters* (Anon. 1803a), an anonymous production published by Thomas Tegg in 1803 (see Figure 16.1). Although the names are changed, the chapbook is a virtual plagiarism of the novel, now focused on the activities of Father Innocent (the ironic revision of Ambrosio's name) and Philario (the Rosario/Matilda character).

Another chapbook based on a few of *The Monk*'s many subplots is *Amalgro & Claude; Or Monastic Murder; Exemplified in the Dreadful Doom of an Unfortunate Nun* (1803). This text mixes the adventures of robbers with the bleeding nun legend. It then suddenly inserts the Faust figure, who appears as the "Great Bashaw," an unexpected orientalizing trope that signals the recent fascination with the Rosetta Stone, which had been discovered in 1799 by Napoleon's armies and had come into British possession in 1801. Toward the end of the text the evil prioress tries to force the beautiful heroine Claude (Agnes in the original source novel) to drink poison rather than shame the convent.

Scholars most frequently claim that the short Gothic tale or chapbook grew out of the earlier tradition of cheap broadside (because printed on one side of the paper)



Figure 16.1 Frontispiece to *Father Innocent* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1803)

ballads or street literature, and certainly one can see in the shorter eight-page chapbooks the residue of this direct oral to written tradition (James 1963). Gary Kelly has recently observed that this early street literature is characterized by its “emphasis on destiny, chance, fortune and leveling forces such as death, express[ing] the centuries-old experience of common people . . . with little or no control over the conditions of their lives . . . For these people, life was a lottery” (Kelly 2002: x). According to Kelly, the fact that the lower classes were the target audience of these early productions is also obvious from their very heavy use of narrative repetition, their emphasis on incident and adventure, and their episodic and anecdotal structures. The other major difference between lower- and middle-class reading materials is the absence in the lower-class works of any extended depictions of subjectivity or emotions in the protagonists (Kelly 2002: x, xv). The earlier “lottery mentality” that was operative in the lower-class chapbooks was eventually

replaced during the late eighteenth century by what Kelly calls a dominant “investment mentality” that we can see evidenced in the emerging middle-class chapbooks. This “investment mentality” was characterized by the Protestant ideologies of self-improvement, self-advancement, modernization and self-discipline, or “the middle-class discourse of merit” (Kelly 2002: x, xxiii). Increasingly hostile to lower-class street literature, which it saw as politically subversive and at the same time spiritually reactionary, the middle class effectively displaced street literature by co-opting it.

Clearly delimited as a genre that flourished between 1770–1820, the Gothic chapbook has been discussed in largely accusatory tones by earlier critics who blame it for the eventual decline of the canonical Gothic novel’s status and popularity. As there are at least one thousand Gothic chapbooks currently extant in Britain alone (Potter 2005; Koch 2002a; Koch 2002b, Mayo 1959; Mayo 1942), it is virtually impossible to provide anything other than a snapshot or freeze-frame portrait of the genre. Along with Isaac Crookenden, Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson was one of the most prolific writers of Gothic chapbooks, the author of some 29 volumes of fiction and more than one hundred short works, at least half of which are Gothic.

Isaac Crookenden, Wilkinson’s chief rival in the chapbook business, took up the pen to compose his own denunciation of poor young women forced into convents or sometimes underground cells in his *The Distressed Nun* (1802). In this confused tale connecting at least four separate subplots, the lovely Herselia di Brindoli is tricked by her evil and greedy brother into a convent where she comes under the control of the abbess, “an unfeeling monster, [who] tendered the worldly-separating veil to our distressed heroine, who resolutely refused it” (Crookenden 1802: 37). In revenge, the abbess imprisoned Herselia “in one of the most horrid dungeons under the foundation of the monastery; where many a victim of conventual austerity had lingered out a wretched existence. Here was the lovely sufferer doomed to sustain the double malice of her brother’s remorseless cruelty, and the abbess’s vindictive spirit” (Crookenden 1802: 37). But as this is a Gothic chapbook, the morality will be swift and sure: the evil brother is poisoned by his mistress and Herselia is eventually released and placed in full possession of her family’s estates.

A chapbook that was published anonymously in London in 1803 plays on the name of the major character in the French pornographic classic, *Venus in the Cloister; Or, The Nun in her Smock* (English translation 1683), that is, *The Nun; Or, Memoirs of Angelique; An Interesting Tale*. Although one would hope to see similarities between the novel and the chapbook, there are none. And, although the frontispiece prominently features a nun exposing her breast to a monk, almost in imitation of the garden scene in Lewis’s *The Monk*, there is only the hint of such a corresponding scene in the chapbook. Clearly, the chapbook has been constructed to appeal to a reading public that would have been familiar with the Lewis text, even in chapbook form, and perhaps they would have known the heroine’s name was associated with *Venus* and therefore expect a quasi-pornographic work. One can only assume they were disappointed by the tameness and predictably of the actual work that they either borrowed or purchased (see Figure 16.2).

This eighteen-page chapbook presents the usual account of a young woman forced into a convent against her wishes by her father, who has offered her up in



Figure 16.2 Frontispiece to *The Nun: Or, Memoirs of Angelique: An Interesting Tale* (London: Tegg and Castleman, 1803)

prayerful sacrifice if one of his shipping ventures returns a profit. Although Angelique is already in love with Ferdinand, her father is unrelenting, and so she takes her vows and lives for one year as a nun. It is at this point that the mother superior informs her that a young novice is to share her room and, as one expects, the young novice turns out to be Ferdinand (the name of the love interest in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* of 1790) in disguise. The lovers repair quickly to a chapel where they catch a monk and nun in flagrante, and so the monk agrees to marry them and help them escape in exchange for their silence about his nocturnal activities in the confessional. Much is made of underground tunnels connecting the convent and the monastery, as well as the folly of maintaining allegiance to her vows as a nun when she was forced into them against her will. Typical Protestant appeals are made by Ferdinand to Angelique's "conscience":

Why would you intreat your maker to eradicate those very feelings he has himself implanted? Why pray for their annihilation only for the purpose of adopting such a line of conduct as he never meant you to pursue? since, if he had, some impulse would have arisen in your own to aid you in the prosecution of it. Conscience, my sweet Angelique, conscience would have whispered to your soul your father's cruel adoption, if it had been essential to your salvation, or if the Almighty had looked with pleasure on the sacrifice. But believe me, when I tell you in the words of St Evremont, though much more seriously than he, when dissuading the Duchess of Mazarine that your perseverance is not virtue, but, in fact, a temptation of the Demon, who envious of the glory of God, will not suffer our admiration to be given to his most beautiful work.

(Anon. 1803b: 10)

The reference to the “Duchess of Mazarine,” one of King Charles II's French Catholic mistresses, is a particularly telling one, as it was her biography in a highly fictional adaptation that was the basis for Aphra Behn's *The History of a Nun* (1688). Angelique allows herself to be married to Ferdinand and, shortly after the ceremony, they attend a masquerade ball in which several of the participants arrive dressed in clerical costume, suggesting a performative quality to this critique of Catholicism. While dancing with a cardinal and then an abbé, Angelique is separated from her husband and suddenly finds herself in the arms of a monk who turns out to be her father in disguise (the scene in the frontispiece illustration). Confronting her for her duplicity and renunciation of her vows, he condemns and threatens her and finally concludes this, the most dramatic scene in the work, by plunging a knife into Ferdinand's breast. He ends his days as an actual monk in the monastery of Chartreuse, doing penance for this murder, and he learns just before he dies that his daughter gave birth to a stillborn child and then promptly died herself. The work ends with a denunciation of parental tyranny and an unmistakable jibe at the Catholic Church for fostering such a system:

May [this tale], perhaps, sooner or later induce some father to decline the adoption of violent measures, when mild ones have been tried without effect; for when a parent attempts to curb the natural right of choice in his child, authority swells into tyranny, and the inherent spirit of free-will bursting its bonds, flies into extremes that but for such oppression it would have shuddered to think of. Filial affection is absorbed by this grand injustice, and the parent loses his child, and the daughter her father, by his unbounded exertion of that power, a moderate use of which might have insured long life and happiness to both. To tear my Angelique from connections the most delicate and natural, in order to the accomplishment of an absurd vow, is an action I now wonder how I could be guilty of, since my reason has learnt to appreciate with more accuracy the goodness of the Deity and the rights of human nature.

(Anon. 1803b: 18)

GOTHIC BALLADS

Gothic Ballads, with their dead babies, seduced nuns, abandoned mermaids, undead knights and malicious monks, enjoyed a heyday in Germany and England from the

late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Steeped in folk and oral traditions, these neo-primitivist ballads were a transitional genre – part oral, part written – and as such they mediated in their very existence a culture in rapid flux. The ballad is perhaps one of the most unstable of genres in its implications, highly traditional and providential, while its later manifestations appear to advocate the need to renounce superstitions in favor of the emerging rationalistic code of conduct that bourgeois Europe was tentatively embracing. Bishop Thomas Percy's "Appendix II: On the Ancient Metrical Romances" attached to his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) is particularly telling in regard to the presence of ballads within the larger Gothic imaginary. Percy's need to construct a dark Northern origin for Britain, shrouded in mists of obscurity, suggests for Clifford Siskin

a mysteriously romantic time that gave way to an enlightened present; it also includes our ongoing fascination with what Gothicism – with its strange mix of chivalry haunted by trips to Catholic countries and hints of the forbidden East – was and, to a large extent, still is . . . a site for the symbolic violence of selective forgetting and remembering.

(Siskin 1988: 11)

Perhaps the best-known adaptations of the Gothic aesthetic can be seen in the ballads by William Wordsworth (1770–1850), for instance, "The Thorn," and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," both of them published in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

The late-eighteenth-century European ballad craze originated in the publication of Percy's *Reliques*, which was enthusiastically received in Germany and then made its way back to England, exerting a powerful influence on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Lewis and Scott. Frank Sayers's *Dramatic Sketches of the Ancient Northern Mythology* (1790) was also popular in both England and Germany and seemed to promise the rise of a new type of literature steeped in Anglo-German Romantic sensibilities. But even more Gothically potent, the supernatural poetic tales of Gottfried August Bürger (1748–1794) were translated from German into English by the early 1790s, circulated widely in manuscript form, and were finally published in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1796. Widely hailed as inaugurating a new and vigorous literary style, Bürger himself admitted that he had been initially influenced by the traditional English ballad "Sweet William's Ghost." Walter Scott began his literary career by translating Bürger's "Lenora" as "William and Helen" in 1796, remembering years later how the "fanciful wildness" of "Lenora" as read by Anna Barbauld to an Edinburgh literary society "electrified" the reading public, inaugurating a new era in poetic sensibilities (Scott 1932: 37–38). In concert with the young Scott and his less than enthusiastic collaborator Robert Southey, Lewis attempted to exploit the Bürger craze by publishing 60 ballads in his *Tales of Wonder* (1801), a two-volume assortment of both original compositions (mainly in volume one) and adaptations or translations taken from the German as well as earlier British ballads by Jonson, Dryden, Gray, Burns, Percy and others (volume two). In a 1799 letter to Scott, Lewis wrote that his collection would feature "a Ghost or a Witch [as the] *sine-qua-non* ingredient in all the dishes, of which I mean to compose my hobgoblin repast" (qtd. in Mortensen 2004: 81). By

translating volk ballads such as Herder's "The Erl-King's Daughter" and "Elver's Hoh," Bürger's "Der Wilde Jäger" and Goethe's "The Erl-King," and positioning them alongside earlier British works such as Jonson's "The Witches' Song" or Gray's "The Fatal Sisters," Lewis attempted to forge nothing less than an alternative supernatural literary genealogy for British poetry, one that seamlessly incorporated the Germanic as part of its heritage, rather than as a "foreign importation" (see Mortensen 2004: 82).

GOTHIC OPERA

Gothic opera can best be understood as what came to be known as "rescue operas." Very similar in plot to the earliest Gothic novels and, in fact, frequently borrowing the Gothic's settings, characters and themes, these operas are "sung Gothic," or an oral and performative transmission of the Gothic mode. They most frequently focused on two themes: the domestic ritual sacrifice of a woman, or the unlawful political imprisonment of innocent victims of tyranny (see Charlton 1992). In both cases, the rescue operas staged elaborate releases of these victims only after their heroic efforts allowed them to prove their worth, hence the operas collaborated in promoting a secularizing bourgeois agenda of earning one's salvation through one's own efforts. Extremely popular throughout Europe from roughly 1780 to 1840, Gothic operas deserve to be recognized as important performative ideological markers of the Gothic imaginary.

Critical consensus argues that the Gothic/rescue opera had its first incarnation in Friedrich von Schiller's robber-rescue drama, *Die Räuber* (1781). Translated into French as *Les Voleurs* by Friedel and de Bonneville in 1785, the drama was then translated into English by Alexander Tytler in 1792 and seems to have influenced the first English opera with Gothic features, Samuel Arnold's *The Banditti, or Love's Labyrinth* (1781; with John O'Keefe). From the beginning, *Die Räuber* was viewed as an amalgam of French revolutionary spirit and Germanic hyperbole, a drama that "seemed to epitomize everything that was menacing in recent Continental literature and politics" (Mortensen 2004: 155). By the 1790s these Gothic/rescue operas were extremely popular, both in Britain and France, and adaptations of popular Gothic novels about victimization and persecution reached all classes in a variety of theatrical and operatic venues. The staged form of these plots stressed the dramatic effects, and, as the Terror's impact spread, Gothic villains began to appear in increasingly horrific manifestations in both England as well as in Germany and France. In B.J. Marsollier des Vivetières's very popular and long-running opera *Camille, ou le Souterrain*, we have a miniature reenactment of the most Gothic of interpolated episodes in Madame de Genlis's novelistic "letters on education," *Adèle et Théodore* (1782; translated 1783), *The Affecting History of the Duchess of C***, in which an Italian noblewoman is imprisoned by her husband for nine years before she is released, a motif that would appear fairly quickly in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and its imitations (Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, 1793). The use of the imprisonment and rescue motif seems to have originated in the private domestic sphere and then moved to the public, political realm in works that feature male aristocrats under siege by hostile, usually "revolutionary" forces.

GOTHIC DRAMA

Gothic drama can most fruitfully be examined by recognizing that it was not a pure genre, but rather a hybridized form that made use of a number of formulaic Gothic devices, such as the foreboding or premonitory dream, the uncanny double, the confusion between the real and the fantastic, the devilish villain with quasi-supernatural powers, and the use of cathedrals or exotic locales as settings. Gothic drama can be divided into early, middle and late periods. The early period, 1780–1800, is characterized by such Gothic dramas as Horace Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother* (1768), Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1797), or James Boaden's and Henry Siddons's dramatic adaptations of Radcliffe's novels (Summers provides a listing of the various plays based on Radcliffe's novels [Summers 1941: 141–42], as well as those based on Lewis [Summers 1941: 97–98; 419–26]). The middle period saw the development of the Gothic melodrama and is best represented by the first of this kind: Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (1802). The later period saw the revival of the earliest works, but more importantly there were new plays that were melodramatic adaptations of popular Gothic poems, stories or novels, most notably James Planché's *The Vampire: Or, The Bride of the Isles* (1820) and Richard B. Peake's *Presumption, Or The Fate of Frankenstein* (1823). These last two plays were consistently revived and held their popularity through the middle of the nineteenth century; indeed, Dion Boucicault would write another version of *The Vampire* in 1852, featuring Alan Ruby, a Restoration vampire who is finally dispatched by Dr Rees, a student of the supernatural, with a charmed bullet (Murray 2004: 189). And Fitzball in 1855 would write the English libretto for a four-act opera by Edward Loder, *Raymond and Agnes*, itself an earlier melodramatic adaptation of one of the inset tales within Lewis's novel *The Monk* (1796). The multiple adaptations of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (1897) would spawn in mutated form the later film franchises that became so prominent within the horror film genre.

Although a ghost was briefly used in Harriet Lee's *The Mysterious Marriage* (1793), the ghost made its most spectacular return to the British stage in Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, 1797), generally considered the most popular Gothic drama performed in England in the late 1790s. Lewis himself in his footnotes to the drama acknowledged that the “Dream of Francis in Schiller's *Robbers*” was an important influence on his play (Evans 1947: 167). It was performed 83 times between December of 1797 and 1800, an incredible number for any stage play at the time, and it continued to be popular and produced until 1825. The appearances of Lewis's female ghost were roundly criticized, and the drama was in fact viewed as the epitome of Germanic – that is, Jacobin – tastes and thus considered revolutionary and dangerous to the British public. Although the ghosts in Shakespeare's plays had been popular since 1700, the subject of supernatural revenants on stage assumed a new urgency in an era where religious debates were almost as contentious as political ones (see Hoeveler 2010a).

James Boaden (1762–1839) was actually the first Gothic dramatist to use a male ghost dressed in armor and seen from behind a veil of gauze in his production of *Fontainville Forest* (1794), based on Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*. Henry Siddons's production of the *Sicilian Romance, Or The Apparition of the Cliff*

(Covent Garden, 1794) uses the device of a daughter saved by what appears to be her mother's ghost. This drama undercuts the supernatural element by revealing that the mother had been imprisoned by her evil husband so that he could bigamously marry a young and wealthy heiress. The mystery of her ghostly appearances at night, seen by many around the cliff where she is imprisoned, is resolved when the daughter Julia unbars a door and her mother magically emerges, as if from the dead.

In addition, bleeding nuns, a scythe-wielding Death and a variety of "ambulant phantoms" were also stock figures in the Gothic repertoire. *Raymond and Agnes, Or The Castle of Lindenberg* (Covent Garden, 1797) with "Music by Mr Reeve," was an early adaptation that advertised itself on the playbill as "founded chiefly on the Principal Episode in *The Monk*." Lewis himself adapted his own material in his Gothic drama *Raymond and Agnes* (1809), and like the earlier versions, he focused his dramatic version on the legend of the bleeding nun, although it is necessary to point out that this legend was actually a transmogrification of the earlier Germanic demon-lover ballad. In Lewis's play, Agnes is being held captive in Lindenburg Castle and, with the assistance of Raymond, makes her escape disguised as the Ghost of the Bleeding Nun, a legend that the family continued to evoke years after the original nun's death. The plot becomes complicated when the ghost herself actually does make appearances and the material realm uneasily coexists with the spiritual in an uncanny dance of the (un)dead with the living. In their presentations of actual ghosts onstage, both Lewis's play and Boaden's earlier *Fontainville Forest* relied on the same visual technique: a sheet of gauze producing a blue-grey haze and hanging between the audience and the ghost. The ghostly effect was achieved by using the green halves of the shades of the Argand lamps that were placed in the wings of the stage (Warner 2006: 148).

John William Polidori's novella *The Vampyre* (1819) was written in 1816 while he was living in Switzerland with Lord Byron, serving both as his traveling companion and his personal physician. Polidori appears to have been influenced by the short and unfinished ghost story written by Byron, *A Fragment* (1819), as well as Goethe's "Die Braut von Korinth" (1797), Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), and John Herman Merivale's *The Dead Men of Pest* (1802), all of them featuring fictional vampires who are noticeably different from the aristocratic and human Lord Ruthven of Polidori's tale. Originally pirated and published under the name of Byron, the novella went through five editions in its first year (Macdonald 1991: 190) and was praised by Goethe as Byron's masterpiece (Butler 1956: 55). Polidori had to threaten legal action to have his authorship acknowledged, and even then he was paid only £30 by Henry Colburn, the publisher (Stiles *et al.* 2010: 798). The story of a seductive vampire who preys on the blood of beautiful virgins made its way quickly to the stage, and during the nineteenth century there were approximately 35 different versions on British, French and American stages, most of them indebted to Polidori's novella as their source (Stuart 1994: 3). James Robinson Planché, author of 72 original plays and 104 adaptations/translations, adapted Polidori's novella for an August 1820 London adaptation, *The Vampyre; Or, The Bride of the Isles*. This is the best-known and longest-running version on the British stage, although it is also indebted to the French melodramatic adaptation of the novella, *Le Vampyre: mélodrama en trios actes* (June 1820) by Charles Nodier, Pierre Carmouche, and Achille de Jouffroy (Stuart 1994: 41). Sleep-walking, hypnotic trances, optical illusions and foreboding

dreams and visions figure prominently in Planché's version and suggest that the supernatural has begun to be figured within the Gothic as a biological force that science will eventually be able to explain and control (see McFarland 1987). On a lighter note, the play was moved to Scotland for its setting because the theatre troupe happened to have a set of kilts left over from an earlier production of *Macbeth*.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is, along with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, one of the seminal Gothic texts of the British tradition. It too was quickly adapted for the stage, first by Richard B. Peake as *Presumption, Or The Fate of Frankenstein* (1823), a play that was thought by many to be impious, so much so that it was picketed and leaflets distributed against its performance (Cox 1992: 386). Despite all of the negative publicity, the play was a success, with the *Theatrical Observer* (August 1, 1823) claiming that: "The moral here is striking. It points out that man cannot pursue objects beyond his obviously prescribed powers without incurring the penalty of shame and regret at his audacious folly" (qtd. in Cox 1992: 387). In this version, the Creature is nameless, but listed in the Larpent version as "the demon" (Cox 1992: 387), while Forry has noted that in this adaptation the Creature is "Calibanized" (Forry 1990: 22), perhaps revealing the extent to which Shakespeare's works were still part of cultural parlance. In this version, Victor has been driven to impious experiments because he has been separated from his true love, Agatha De Lacey. Elizabeth is now the sister of Victor and Clerval is engaged to marry her; Fritz, a servant to Frankenstein, is introduced, along with his wife Madame Ninon, and gypsies and villagers also appear in order to explore class issues. Clerval and Elizabeth sing of their love for each other, while Frankenstein darkly acknowledges his belief in the devil, who he is sure is motivating him to pursue his strange and dangerous scientific experiments: "It's the Devil – for I'm sure *he's* at the bottom of it, and that makes me so nervous" (qtd. in Cox 1992: 392). Through a series of complications, Agatha finds herself suddenly confronted by the Demon, who at first causes her to fall into a river, and then rescues her just as Victor appears and shoots the Demon in order to free Agatha from his arms (Act 2).

This first dramatic adaptation of the *Frankenstein* narrative continued to evolve with the development of filmic technologies into one of the most potent and enduring of cultural representations. Along with adaptations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the mythic figures of the lower-class monster and the predatory aristocrat have worked to keep the Gothic alive in bourgeois popular consciousness throughout the twentieth century. Adaptations of the central Gothic narrative – sexual anxiety, social and religious upheaval, and revolutionary political transformation – continue to proliferate today in a variety of forms (see Nelson 2012). Their longevity suggests that the appeal of this genre/aesthetic meets persistent and powerful cultural needs.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1799) *The Castle of Lindenberg; Or The History of Raymond & Agnes, a Romance*, London.
 — (1803a) *Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins; Or, The Crimes of Cloisters*, London.
 — (1803b) *The Nun: Or, Memoirs of Angelique: An Interesting Tale*, 1794, London.

- Butler, E.M. (1956) *Byron and Goethe: Analysis of a Passion*, London: Bowes and Bowes.
- Charlton, D. (1992) "On Redefinitions of Rescue Opera," in M. Boyd (ed.) *Music and the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 169–88.
- Cox, J. (ed.) (1992). *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Crookenden, I. (1802) *The Distressed Nun*, London.
- Evans, B. (1947) *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Forry, S.E. (1990) *Hideous Progenies: Dramatizations of "Frankenstein" from Mary Shelley to the Present*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Frank, F. (1987) *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel*, New York: Garland.
- Hoeveler, D.L. (2010a). *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780–1820*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- (2010b) "More Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Chapbook Collection at the University of Virginia Library," *Papers on Language & Literature*, 46:164–91.
- James, L. (1963) *Fiction for the Working Man: 1830–1850*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, G. (2002) "Introduction," in G. Kelly (ed.) *Varieties of Female Gothic. Vol. 2. Street Gothic: Female Gothic Chapbooks*, London: Pickering & Chatto, i–xxv.
- Koch, A. (2002a) "'The Absolute Horror of Horrors' Revised: A Bibliographical Checklist of Early-Nineteenth-Century Gothic Bluebooks," *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* 9. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc09_n03.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2012).
- (2002b) "Gothic Bluebooks in the Princely Library of Corvey and Beyond," *Cardiff Corvey* IX. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc09_n01.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2012).
- Macdonald, D.L. (1991) *Poor Polidori: A Critical Biography of the Author of The Vampyre*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McFarland, R.E. (1987) "The Vampire on Stage: A Study in Adaptations," *Comparative Drama*, 21: 19–33.
- Mayo, R.D. (1959) "Gothic Romance in the Magazines," *PMLA*, 65: 762–89.
- (1942) "The Gothic Short Story in the Magazines," *Modern Language Review*, 37: 448–54.
- Mortensen, P. (2004) *British Romanticism and Continental Influences: Writing in an Age of Europhobia*, New York: Palgrave.
- Murray, P. (2004) *From the Shadow of Dracula*, London: Cape.
- Nelson, V. (2012) *Gothika*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Peake, R.B. (1992) *Presumption, Or the Fate of Frankenstein*, 1823, in J. Cox (ed.) *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 385–425.
- Planché, J. (1986) *The Vampire: Or, The Bride of the Isles*, 1820, in D. Roy (ed.) *Plays by James Robinson Planché*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 45–68.
- Potter, F. (2005) *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835: Exhuming the Trade*, New York: Palgrave.
- St Clair, W. (2004) *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, W. (1932) "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," 1830, in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. 4, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.
- Siskin, C. (1988) *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*, New York: Oxford University Press.

- Stiles, A. *et al.* (2010) “Somnambulism and Trance States in the Works of John William Polidori, Author of *The Vampyre*,” *European Romantic Review*, 21: 789–807.
- Stuart, R. (1994) *Stage Blood: Vampires of the Nineteenth-Century Stage*, Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press.
- Summers, M. (1941) *A Gothic Bibliography*, London: Fortune.
- (1938) *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel*, London: Fortune.
- Varma, D.P. (1957) *The Gothic Flame*, London: Arthur Barker.
- Warner, M. (2006) *Phantasmagoria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watt, W. (1932) *Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School: A Study of Chapbook Gothic Romances*, New York: Russell & Russell.

FURTHER READING

- Brooks, P. (1976) *The Melodramatic Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (Claims that the melodrama, imported from France to England, revealed that the “thirst for the Sacred” (16) was still operating in the public performative realm.)
- Burwick, F. (2009) *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Argues that Schiller’s *Die Räuber* inspired Coleridge’s *Remorse* as well as a number of rescue operas (173). For all of its Gothic trappings, Stephen Storace’s *Haunted Tower* (libretto by James Cobb) is, for Burwick, “an anti-Gothic comedy with all the trappings of a Gothic melodrama” (119), while he has traced its origins to Sade’s play *La tour enchantée* (1788), about a lecherous king who is murdered in a tower by his friend, a baron, after the king makes a derogatory remark about the baron’s current lover.)
- Hadley, E. (1995) *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800–1885*, Stanford: Stanford University Press. (Positions melodramatic discourse within the political debates of the time, notably the “old price wars,” concerning fees to attend theatre performances, and the passage of poor laws as reflected in dramatic adaptations of Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*.)
- Jacobs, E. (2000) *Accidental Migrations: An Archaeology of Gothic Discourse*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press. (The most extensive and well-documented history of the Gothic’s production and circulation as a self-contained discursive practice. Very valuable for its information on the rise and proliferation of circulating libraries in England and their dissemination of Gothic novels.)
- Kendrick, W. (1991) *The Thrill of Fear: 250 Years of Scary Entertainment*, New York: Grove. (An engaging overview of Gothic drama and the way it led directly to the development of Gothic and horror films.)
- Meisel, M. (1983) *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. (A classic text that offers intellectual and social background on the place and practice of the arts during the nineteenth century.)
- Moody, J. (2000) *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770–1840*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (An important study that explores the non-licensed theatrical productions in England from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.)
- Richter, D. (1988) “The Reception of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s,” in R. Uphaus (ed.) *The Idea of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century*, East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 117–37. (Richter connects the rise of circulating libraries with the increase in more naïve readers (126), and claims that the Gothic is to all intents and purposes dead by 1822.)
- Williams, A. (2006) “Ghostly Voices: ‘Gothic Opera’ and the Failure of Gounod’s *La Nonne Sanglante*,” in R.M. Marvin and D.A. Thomas (eds) *Operatic Migrations*:

Transforming Words and Crossing Boundaries, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 125–44. (Focuses on Charles Gounod's version of *La nonne sanglante*, which saw eleven performances in 1854. As Williams theorizes, the Gounod opera failed because the bleeding nun assumed an all too material presence, singing rather loudly in several scenes, so that what should have been a ghostly apparition from the transcendent realm instead became an uncomfortably material body and voice on the operatic stage.)

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

GOthic ROMANCE,
1760–1830

—♦—

Sue Chaplin

THE MADNESS OF ROMANCE

“Romance” in the early-to-mid-eighteenth century primarily referred, in literary terms, to a genre of prose fiction popular in previous centuries that celebrated medieval chivalry and adventure and that, in its more contemporary forms, combined, or even replaced, rather fantastical narrations of heroism with tales of love and intrigue. Whilst immensely popular, these fictions tended to lack literary credibility in the neoclassical period and were often the subject of satire. Commenting on the formulaic and fantastical nature of romance, Samuel Johnson observed in a 1750 essay for his journal *The Rambler* that, “Almost all the fictions of the last age will vanish, if you deprive them of a hermit and a wood, a battle and a shipwreck” (Greene 2008: 175). As discussed below, similar disparaging assertions were made frequently by critics in relation to the Gothic romance later in the century: the stock conventions of the genre were ridiculed and the popularity of the form lamented in terms of what it implied regarding the intellectual acuity of its middle-class readers.

What concerned Johnson and his contemporaries, however, was not only the genre’s lack of literary accomplishment, but also its moral impropriety. Samuel Richardson, for instance, complained that female-authored romance (this was a genre associated closely with women writers and readers) amounted to a kind of “poison” corrupting the moral sensibilities of its female consumers. In a letter to his close friend Lady Bradshaigh on the subject of contemporary women writers, Richardson opined:

What a set of wretches, wishing to perpetuate their infamy, have we – to make the Behn’s, the Manley’s, and the Haywood’s [*sic*] look white. From the same injured, disgraced, profaned Sex, let us be favoured with an antidote to these women’s Poison!

(Carroll 1964: 173)

Concerns as to the moral effect of romance consumption were reiterated in the 1790s in the context of a widespread critical reaction against Gothic fiction, and (as

discussed below) these literary anxieties were inseparable at that historical moment from the political reaction against the French Revolution and its “terrors.” In the post-revolutionary context, romance as *Gothic* romance became something of a lightning rod for fears concerning social order, feminine propriety and the borders of literary taste and moral decency.

To return to the earlier period, though, it is fair to say that the hostility to romance fiction was in part a consequence of its challenge not only to morality, but to Reason: its *epistemological* impropriety, as it were. Romance was thought to encourage a distorted world-view, an excess of “fancy” that posed a danger not only to sound moral health, but to the very sanity of the individual. For Johnson, the “airy notions” of romance threatened to push a reader “beyond the limits of sober probability;” he concluded “all power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity” (Hanson 1992: 133). The idea that romance could so distort a reader’s perception of reality as to constitute a kind of “insanity” is the premise of Charlotte Lennox’s 1752 novel *The Female Quixote*. Like her fictional forebear, Miguel de Cervantes’s Don Quixote, Lennox’s protagonist Arabella is so deluded by her excessive consumption of romance that she fancies herself the heroine of such a narrative and continually reads her experiences through the distorting prism of romance fiction. The effect, of course, is highly comic, but Lennox’s satire has a clear moral purpose: Arabella’s delusions are dangerous to her sanity, her happiness and her safety. These concerns emerge later in the century, in relation to the Gothic romance, in a less obviously didactic satirical form: Jane Austen’s Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) is a less extreme version of Lennox’s Arabella, construing her experiences and forming her expectations of life on the basis of the conventions of Gothic romance.

ROMANCE, REALISM AND GOTHIC EXCESS

Johnson and Richardson’s concerns regarding “airy notions” and “women’s poison” were part of the wider literary context out of which the modern novel emerged as ostensibly inimical to the excesses of romance. In Johnson’s words, fiction ought to act as a “pleasing dress” for “Truth” (Greene 2008: 176), and the form that came to be privileged over romance was the realist novel. The appetite for romance continued, however, and, within a new, highly fluid cultural and political landscape, Gothic fiction absorbed and shaped this demand for the strange and fantastical. The first Gothic romance, Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* of 1764, illustrates the contemporary tension between the attractive excesses of romance and the “sober probability” of the new realist novel. Walpole’s second Preface to his text, which appeared in 1765, posits his work as a literary experiment designed to marry these seemingly incompatible literary forms; his aim is to “blend two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern,” and in so doing to make his characters “think, speak and act as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions” (Walpole 1996: 9–10). What is clear from this is that Walpole’s concern is not with *material* probabilities (the “extraordinary” certainly dominates the plot of the narrative), but with psychological realism: characters are to behave convincingly in fantastical circumstances, and the actual events of the text are indeed so very bizarre that the work could stand on these grounds as a test case in “the power of fancy over reason.” Thus, from the moment of its inception Gothic romance both

incorporated and exaggerated the tendency of earlier romance toward what Johnson and many of his contemporaries regarded as a kind of literary madness. Moreover, this instability and excess was manifest not only at the level of content, but in relation to the very production and consumption of the Gothic. Walpole's second edition of *Otranto* was published in order to allow Walpole to admit his authorship and, through his long Preface, justify his project with reference to the key literary and cultural debates of his time. The first edition had been published under a pseudonym – under two pseudonyms, in fact. A fictitious “editor” named William Marshal presented the text as an ancient document translated from Italian by a priest named Onuphrio Muralto. The Gothic thus originates in a moment of literary subterfuge, and Gothic romance throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often imitated Walpole's precedent in devising strategies to “authenticate” a text with reference to its supposedly historical origin (see Sophia Lee's 1783 *The Recess*, for instance, discussed briefly below). Gothic thus retained the epistemological impropriety – the tendency in this instance to promote a distorted perception of historical “reality” – that characterized earlier romance in the view of mid-eighteenth-century critics.

Gothic romance from its beginning tended to problematize notions of literary authenticity, origin and verisimilitude, and even critics who praised Walpole's 1765 innovation had reservations regarding the extraordinary supernatural content of *The Castle of Otranto*. Clara Reeve's 1778 Gothic romance *The Old English Baron* follows Walpole's text closely in terms of plot and theme, but in her Preface Reeve states that she intends to eschew Walpolean “fancy” in favor of Johnsonian “probability”; the worst excesses of romance will give way to realism and Reeve insists that the work be termed “Gothic” only in terms of its historical setting (Reeve 2003: 3). Nevertheless, the text not only contains a supernatural element, but relies for its closure (the legitimate heir is returned to his estate following the discovery of the murder of his ancestor) upon precisely the sort of Gothic romance convention that Reeve disparages in her Preface: the supernatural intervenes to reveal a crime and restore rightful governance. As a woman writer with close links to the male literary establishment, Reeve was undoubtedly keen to maintain in her work a certain literary propriety that might be compromised by an enthusiastic embrace of the Walpolean “modern romance.” Nevertheless, in spite of her ambivalence toward Gothic “fancy,” and in opposition to critics such as Johnson, Reeve maintained a commitment to romance, regarding it as in certain ways superior to contemporary realist fiction. Her 1785 essay *The Progress of Romance* takes the form of a debate between a man (Hortensius) and a woman (Euphrasia) in which the learned female reader of romance articulates a powerful defense of the genre whilst at the same time acknowledging its problematic relation to Reason, history and truth.

Reeve's stated aim in this essay is to “methodise” the history of romance and to account for its relation to the development of the contemporary novel (Reeve 1785: 8). By means of an extended analysis of the history of romance, she concludes that romance constitutes the origin of the eighteenth-century novel: out of the “ruins” of old romance, she contends, “the modern novel sprung up” (Reeve 1785: 8). *The Progress of Romance* thus deviates to some extent from the more standard critical practice of setting the novel against romance and casting the latter as a primitive form incompatible with civilized literary taste. In spite of Reeve's celebration of the

influence of romance, though, it remains a genre that is troubling in its capacity to proliferate into new forms and resist systemization. The genre is so diverse that it threatens to disorientate not only the novice reader, but also the experienced critic faced with a mass of fantastical, generically unstable material that “wants to be methodised, to be separated and regulated” (Reeve 1785: 8). At various points, even Euphrasia, Reeve’s champion of romance, appears almost overwhelmed by the task of systemization and frequently represents her own scholarly project as a form of dangerous, disorientating romance adventure:

What Goddess, or what Muse must I invoke to guide me through these vast, unexplored regions of fancy? – regions inhabited by wisdom and folly, by wit and stupidity, by religion and profaneness, by morality and licentiousness. How shall I separate and distinguish the various and opposite qualities of these strange concomitants? – point out some as the objects of admiration and respect, and others of abhorrence and contempt?

(Reeve 1785: 4)

Romance, as a field of study for the critic, is a “fairyland,” a “labyrinth” (Reeve 1785: 54), and Reeve ultimately emphasizes verisimilitude as the aesthetically and intellectually privileged quality that differentiates the modern novel from its predecessor. In modern times, she argues, it is appropriate that the fantastical elements of romance be discarded by a genre concerned, more maturely, with “real life and manners” (Reeve 1785: 111). The novel, however, poses its own problems for this critic; its uncompromising commitment to the depiction of “real life and manners” might well act against the moral interests of readers insofar as for Reeve the modern age is characterized by a certain cultural degeneracy that Reeve codes as feminine. Luxurious living (Reeve refers to the debasing, feminizing effect of “immoderate wealth” and “mean and mercenary pursuits” on the individual and the nation [Reeve 1785: 102]) has corrupted middle- and higher-class society and has had an especially detrimental effect on male identity and behavior (Reeve 1785: 102). Within this context, romance emerges as a potential antidote to the moral laxity of the times through its representation of an ancient chivalric English past governed by the principle of active masculine military virtue. In Reeve’s estimation, then, a certain form of “modern romance,” a “Gothic” divested of fantastical excesses, might serve to invigorate the nation with reference to its chivalric, heroic past. The following section examines in more detail the relationship between the emerging Gothic romance and questions of national history and identity in the mid-to-late eighteenth century.

LITERATURE, HISTORY, NATION

Gothic romance in the mid-to-late eighteenth century was drawn into a variety of debates concerning the political and cultural identity of a nation struggling to formulate for itself a coherent narrative of legitimate origin. In Whig political ideology, for instance, the “Gothic” Anglo Saxon of the English was posited in quasi-mythic terms as the true originators of the country’s ancient constitution. One effect of this gesture was to separate the English nation from French Norman influence, allowing

the English to look for their political beginnings not in the events of 1066 but in an ancient system of rule forged by Anglo Saxons that continued to be reflected in English law. Probably the most influential expression of this ideology came from William Blackstone, whose *Commentaries on the Laws of England* famously speaks of English law as a “Gothic castle” in need of some modernization (Blackstone 1966: 268), but still able to guarantee freedom, justice and political stability to a nation experiencing rapid change.

In the literature and literary criticism of the mid-eighteenth century, the absorption of Gothicism into a wider narrative of national identity continued, encouraging a broad critical re-appraisal of literatures associated prior to this point with a certain primitivism: precisely those tales of chivalry and romance aligned with an ancient national tradition of folklore and myth that were re-worked by writers such as Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe into what James Watt terms “Loyalist Gothic romance” (Watt 1999: 4). Key texts of mid-eighteenth-century literary criticism celebrated romance elements of English culture; they include Thomas Warton’s *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* (1754); Bishop Richard Hurd’s *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, (1762); and Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765). These works reveal a new interest not only in ancient romance, but also in English writers of more recent origin who were understood to have emerged out of this tradition. As Richard Hurd observed:

The greatest geniuses of our own and foreign countries, such as Aristo and Tasso in Italy, and Spenser and Milton in England, were seduced by these barbarities of their forefathers, were even charmed by the Gothic romances. Was this caprice and absurdity in them? Or, may there not be something in the Gothic romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and to the ends of poetry?

(quoted in Punter and Byron 2004: 8)

This re-appraisal of the literary and historical significance of romance was part of a wider cultural project in this period to define for the nation a unique English literary tradition that embraced, for instance, Edward Spenser, John Milton and, most of all, Shakespeare. Elizabeth Montagu’s 1769 *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear* presented the playwright as the key figure within a tradition of English folklore and romance that was more Gothic than Classical; describing Shakespeare as England’s “Gothic bard” (Montagu 1810: 129), Montagu emphasizes the close aesthetic and cultural association between England’s pre-eminent poet and playwright and the Gothic tradition. Only four years earlier, moreover, Horace Walpole, in the second Preface to his “modern romance” *The Castle of Otranto*, had cited Shakespeare as his model. Shakespeare represented for Walpole a turning-point in the English literary tradition; here was a writer capable of marrying tragedy with comedic interludes, and of expertly combining elements of the supernatural and the fantastical with psychological realism. As Walpole states, his intention in writing *Otranto* was to achieve a blending of ancient and modern literary forms and his model for this experiment is Shakespeare.

Shakespeare’s influence upon the shaping of Gothic romance later in the century is especially evident in the work of Ann Radcliffe, referred to by the contemporary writer and critic Nathan Drake as the “Shakspeare [*sic*] of Romance Writers”

(Drake 1798: 249). Radcliffe's work frequently alludes to Shakespeare thematically and through quotations taken from his plays. The epigraph to her 1790 novel *A Sicilian Romance*, for example, is the words spoken by the ghost of Hamlet's father to Hamlet: "I could a tale unfold" (Radcliffe 1993). This quotation anticipates the text's key themes, themes that are ubiquitous in the Gothic romances of this period: misrule, sexual and political corruption and the restoration of a legitimate bloodline.

A Sicilian Romance was Radcliffe's second Gothic fiction and, like all of her other later works with the exception of *Gaston de Blondville* (published posthumously in 1826), it is set in Catholic Europe. The setting of her first romance, however, is North East Scotland and this text deserves special consideration in terms of the wider participation of Gothic romance in contemporary national political and cultural discourses. Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) draws upon the contemporary association of Gothicism (evident in Macpherson's *Ossian* poems, for instance) with a Celtic heritage that worked to consolidate an emerging national literary and cultural tradition in the mid-eighteenth century. Scotland was a contested space in the mid-eighteenth century; the Jacobite uprisings had sought to repudiate the 1701 Act of Union and establish Scotland as an independent, Catholic nation under the governance of the exiled King James II. In Radcliffe's romance, North East Scotland becomes a Gothic space at the outer reaches of the nation in which various contemporary meanings of the Gothic in nationalistic, political and cultural terms collide. The castle of Athlin is a "Gothic structure," an "ancient seat of feudal government" that belongs to (and embodies the power of) a legitimate ruling bloodline that is under threat from the feudal chief, Malcolm (Radcliffe 1995: 3). Athlin's Gothic venerability evokes Blackstone's "Gothic castle" of law that guarantees to a traumatized nation a coherent political history and identity. Athlin, moreover, can be read as representing an essentially English mode of governance set against the Scottish "Other": the tyrannical Malcolm who is finally defeated.

James Watt has argued that fictions such as this constitute a particular form of late-eighteenth-century Gothic literature: the "Loyalist Gothic romance." This mode of the Gothic, he contends, was engaged in a wider contemporary project to "re-imagine national identity" (Watt 1999: 47). Another instance of this form of Loyalist fiction was Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, discussed briefly above. Like Radcliffe's later work, this text privileges a feudal, heroic, masculine environment, invoking those aspects of medieval romance that for Reeve offer a solution to a morally insipid culture given over to luxurious (feminine) excess and in danger of moral and political degeneration. Reeve's men of action exemplify the romance ideal of the chivalric Gothic warrior who brings order and justice. The text privileges ancient English/Gothic feudal governance whilst tempering its militaristic aspect with contemporary eighteenth-century "sentiment:" Reeve's "man of worth" is essentially an eighteenth-century man of sensibility committed to heroic action rather than the passive and effeminate sensory pleasures of "immoderate wealth."

ROMANCE AND REVOLUTION

As E.J. Clery has observed, the popularity of Gothic fiction waned somewhat during the two decades after the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (Clery 2002: 32).

Following this lull, however, the Gothic romance emerged in the 1790s and the early nineteenth century as one of the most widely read, and contentious, forms of fiction. This period also witnessed the beginning of the diversification of literary Gothicism away from the romance and its conventional formulae. The French Revolution in particular provides a key context for understanding not only the explosion in popularity of the Gothic in this period, but the generic and stylistic innovations that began after 1789.

In Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, the protagonist (an avid reader of Gothic romance) asserts to her friend Eleanor Tilney that she has heard "that something very shocking indeed will soon come out in London" (Austen 2003: 107). Eleanor assumes that Catherine is speaking of some violent, revolutionary plot likely to culminate in "dreadful riot." Her brother, Henry, corrects her: "My dear Eleanor, the riot is only in your own brain . . . Miss Morland has been talking about nothing more dreadful than a new publication" (Austen 2003: 108). Gothic romance is associated here with the prospect of revolution: Catherine's literary terrors become Eleanor's terror at the possibility of political violence in the capital. Austen's fiction, written in 1798–1799, forms part of a wider literary debate in this decade concerning the moral and political influences of Gothic fiction. The perceived literary excesses of Gothic romance became aligned in conservative commentary with the violent excesses of the French Revolution. One essay in *The Monthly Review* magazine in 1793, "The Terrorist System of Novel Writing," asserts that Gothic romances have established a "SYSTEM OF TERROR, if not in our streets, and in our fields, at least in our circulating libraries, and in our closets" (Wright 2007: 20). A later essay entitled "Terrorist Novel Writing" (1797) castigates Gothic romance in a similar manner, associating it explicitly with revolutionary terror: its depictions of tyranny and bloodshed seek, like the French, to "*make terror the order of the day*" (Wright 2007: 24, emphasis in original).

The aesthetics of the Gothic romance – its evocation of suspense, the sublime, the fabulous – continued to garner support in this decade, however, and two key essays here are Nathan Drake's 1790 "On Gothic Superstition" and Ann Radcliffe's "On the Supernatural in Poetry," published posthumously in 1826. These essays commend the Gothic's evocation of "terror" as a means toward expanding and invigorating the imagination. Both writers cite Shakespeare as an essential influence upon an English Gothic romance tradition that ought not to be discarded by modern writers critical of "Gothic Superstition." More positive appraisals of Gothic romance also continued to provide a reference point for national debates concerning political identity and unity, although the romance narrative of political history (England's "Gothic" heritage, the notion of English law as a venerable "Gothic castle" in need of preservation) acquired new and often conflicting trajectories in this period as supporters and opponents of the Revolution in France used the well-known tropes and symbols of Gothic romance in order to validate their own reading of events across the Channel. Indeed, Gothic romance in the immediate post-revolutionary period became a highly significant hermeneutic tool for reading and narrating the Revolution abroad and its impact at home. One of the first responses to the Revolution in England was Edmund Burke's 1790 *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in which the Revolution is narrated very much in Gothic terms. The ancient regime is posited as the beautiful, benevolent, organic outcome of centuries of

political and cultural growth suddenly and disastrously torn up by “revolutionary harpies, sprung from night and hell” (Burke 1984: 187). Burke’s Manichean symbolic reading of the Revolution in terms of light and dark, sun and night, angels and devils evokes the moral structure of romance and nowhere is this more apparent than in his treatment of the French queen, Marie Antoinette. He recalls his first sight of her at the French court when she appeared “just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in” (Burke 1984: 169). When she is pursued and almost killed by revolutionaries in the king’s palace, she becomes in Burke’s account the equivalent of a fragile, virginal heroine of a Gothic romance chased through castle corridors by rapacious bandits whose assault on the queen is an assault on a chivalric, feudal body politic that over time has contrived to “make power gentle and obedience liberal” (Burke 1984: 169).

For supporters of the French Revolution, however, this formulation of a Gothic romance narrative of feudal splendor and “gentle power” was a pernicious political strategy designed to conceal the reality of systemic oppression and persecution of the weak. This pro-revolutionary critique of “the principles of Gothic feudalism” was vividly expounded by John Thelwall in his 1793 essay *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace*:

Are these the institutions which Mr B. wishes to support? Are these the regular and orderly fabrics of the ancient and legitimate “government of states” whose plans and materials were “drawn from the old Germanic or Gothic customary” . . . If they are, away with your idle jargon of venerable antiquity . . . they are Bastilles of intellect, which must be destroyed. They are insulting mausoleums of buried rights.

(quoted in Miles 2002: 49)

Robert Miles cites this mid-1790s period as a key transitional point in the history of Gothic fiction. Radcliffe’s 1794 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is for Miles “the last great example of the romance structure” (Miles 2002: 48). The same year marked the publication of William Godwin’s *Things as They Are, Or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*, described by Miles as “the first ostensible Jacobin Gothic” (Miles 2002: 48). This text counters Burke’s celebration of Gothic feudalism by using the conflict between its protagonist, the lower-class Caleb, and the feudal Lord Falkland to reveal the moral bankruptcy of a system of law that Godwin elsewhere calls “a Gothic unintelligible burden” (Godwin 1985: 476). This work departs from the style, structure and conventional plot devices of the Radcliffean romance, and yet the Gothic romance still provides an important context for understanding Godwin’s political and literary strategies.

Like Lord Athlin in Radcliffe’s first romance, Falkland is presented (initially, at least) as a benevolent, paternalistic ruler. He becomes Caleb’s generous patron and mentor. In the person of Lord Tyrrel, Godwin also presents the reader with the archetypal villain of Gothic romance: a version of Radcliffe’s Lord Dunbayne. Indeed, it is the conflict between these two feudal masters that drives the first portion of the narrative. Falkland intervenes on behalf of those that Tyrrel seems intent upon destroying. Set against the barbaric Tyrrel, Falkland’s understanding of aristocratic “honor” coupled with his aesthetic refinement and highly developed sensibility evoke the heroic ideal championed by the Loyalist Gothic romances of earlier years.

Falkland is the protector of the weak and particularly of women. He is a poet, a man of sensibility, the modern-day inheritor of an ancient, chivalric Gothic/English ideal. It is this Gothic fiction of “gentle power” that dissolves in Godwin’s Jacobin reworking of Gothic romance, however. Falkland’s devotion to his “honor” transforms him into a tyrant every bit as ruthless as his enemy. In its representation of Falkland’s brutal defense of his feudal privilege at Caleb’s expense, this Gothic fiction blurs to the point of disintegration the demarcation between the benign man of honor and the murderous tyrant. Falkland becomes the embodiment of a seemingly omniscient, omnipresent force, the personification of Godwin’s “Gothic unintelligible burden” of English law.

Thus, whilst Jacobin Gothic worked to oppose the Burkean romance of feudal government, it nevertheless incorporated (even as it subverted) some of the narrative devices of Gothic romance for its own political ends. This was especially the case with regard to female writers in whose work the particularly vicious impact of patriarchal Gothic government on women is represented. Eliza Fenwick’s 1795 *Secresy, or The Ruin on the Rock*, for instance, subverts the conventions of romance to satirize the Burkean narrative of history through the tyrannical figure of the aristocratic Valmont who is “wrapped in the impenetrable selfishness of high birth [and] denies the possibility of eminent virtue existing without rank” (Fenwick 1998: 63). Nevertheless, Fenwick also appropriates some conventional romance symbolism more sympathetically in order to narrate the ruin of her heroine, Sibella, at the hands of her guardian, Valmont, and her treacherous lover, Clement. Two objects, or settings, are strongly associated, symbolically, with the heroine in this text: an ancient oak tree and the eponymous “ruin on the rock.” The English oak tree was in this period a powerful political symbol of the nation’s past and the longevity of its Gothic constitution. The ruin, meanwhile, was an essential component of the late-eighteenth-century aesthetic of the sublime and the picturesque; it was deployed, in Gothic romance and elsewhere, to inspire terror and a sense of the sublime, and to signify the grandeur *and* transience of ancient institutions. Fenwick associates these symbols not with the ruling elite, but with her politically radical, persecuted and ultimately tragically defeated female protagonist: the oak tree and the ruin are places of refuge for Sibella. Through this gesture of association, the text claims and re-works these symbols for the Jacobin Gothic and the discourse of dissent to which it belonged.

CONCLUSION: THE HISTORICAL ROMANCE

As this essay has suggested, Gothic romance of the late eighteenth century was often used to narrate and validate certain conceptualizations of the nation’s history. Whilst most examples of the genre did not deal explicitly with actual historical events, its evocations of England’s past helped fuel a growing interest in antiquarianism and in the possibilities of literary historical representation. Sophia Lee’s 1783 *The Recess*, for example, used many of the conventions of Gothic romance to create a fictional account of the life of Mary Queen of Scots and her relationship to Elizabeth I. Radcliffe’s romances, moreover, were a significant influence upon the historical fiction of the early-nineteenth-century Scottish author, Walter Scott. Rather like Horace Walpole half a century earlier, Scott was interested in uniting old romance

with the modern novel and in exploiting the literary possibilities of each genre to create a new form of fiction: the historical romance. Beginning with *Waverley* in 1814, Scott published during the next 20 years a series of fictions dealing with Scottish history over several centuries. The novels narrate real historical events – the 1745 Jacobite rebellion in *Waverley*, for instance – but incorporate into the narrative some of the key literary conventions of the Radcliffean Gothic romance. Like Radcliffe’s Scottish settings in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, and her Italian locations in her later texts, for example, Scott’s landscapes are Romantically sublime and they work to trigger in the consciousness of the protagonist an aesthetic and spiritual sense of terror and awe. Edward Waverley’s journey through the Scottish highlands, and its metaphorical significance in terms of his ambivalent affiliation to the Jacobite cause, is often mediated through his encounter with sublime mountain landscapes very similar to those which confront the heroines and heroes of late-eighteenth-century Gothic romance: see, for instance, Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Maria Regina Roche’s *Clermont* (1798). Scott’s novels also rely upon a distinctly Gothic evocation of family and national history. Gothic castles become the physical embodiment of political power stretching back through generations and relics of the past within these structures (ancient portraits, suits of armor and medieval weaponry) become contemporary signifiers of authority and bloodline. Moreover, although Scott eschews the supernatural component of Gothic romance (as did Radcliffe), his work often revives and re-works this element of the genre in order, argues Chad T. May, to narrate the “trauma” of history (May 2005: 98). Thus, the death of the great Clan leader Fergus Mac-Ivor in *Waverley* is supernaturally foretold by the appearance of the “Bodach Glas,” the spirit of a Lowland chieftain named Halbert Hall who was killed in a battle over Scottish territory. Here, as elsewhere in Gothic fiction, the political authority signified by the venerable Gothic castle is seen to be premised at least in part upon a traumatic violence that is resurrected metaphorically and literally through spectral appearances and the return of bloody conflicts over land and lineage.

REFERENCES

- Austen, J. (2003) *Northanger Abbey*, 1817, ed. M. Butler, London: Penguin.
- Blackstone, W. (1966) *Commentaries of the Laws of England*, 1765–69, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burke, E. (1984) *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, ed. C.C. O’Brien, London: Penguin.
- Carroll, J. (ed.) (1964) *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Clery, E.J. (2002) “The Genesis of ‘Gothic’ Fiction,” in J. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21–40.
- Drake, Nathan (1798) *Literary Hours*, London: Sudbury.
- Fenwick, E. (1998) *Secresy, or The Ruin on the Rock*, 1795, ed. I. Grundy, Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Godwin, W. (1985) *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1793, ed. I. Kramnick, London: Penguin.
- Greene, D. (ed.) (2008) *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Hanson, E. (1992) *The Fictions of Romantick Chivalry: Samuel Richardson and Romance*, London: Associated University Press.
- May, C.T. (2005) “‘The Horrors of my Tale’: Trauma, the Historical Imagination and Sir Walter Scott,” *Pacific Coast Philology*, 40.1: 98–116.
- Miles, R. (2002) “The 1790s: The effulgence of Gothic,” in J. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 41–62.
- Montagu, E. (1810) *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, London.
- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2004) *The Gothic*, London: Wiley Blackwell.
- Radcliffe, A. (1993) *A Sicilian Romance*, ed. A. Milbank, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (1995) *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, ed. A. Milbank, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reeve, C. (1785) *The Progress of Romance*, Colchester: C.W. Keymer.
- (2003) *The Old English Baron*, ed. J. Watt, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walpole, H. (1996) *The Castle of Otranto, 1764*, ed. E.J. Clery, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watt, J. (1999) *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, A. (2007) *Gothic Fiction: A Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism*, London: Palgrave.

FURTHER READING

- Botting, F. (2008) *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions*, London: Routledge. (Mainly focuses on contemporary Gothic, but also analyses the relation between Gothic, romance and Romanticism from the early nineteenth century.)
- Clery, E.J. (1995) *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Examines the key historical, cultural and political discourses that shaped the emergence and development of eighteenth-century Gothic.)
- Duncan, I. (1992) *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Examines the emergence of the Gothic out of earlier forms of romance and relates this specifically to the development of historical fiction and the nineteenth-century novel.)
- Gamer, M. (2000) *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Examines the formation and cultural reception of the Gothic during the Romantic era.)
- Miles, R. (2002) *Gothic Writing, 1750–1820: A Genealogy*, 2nd edition, Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Wide-ranging historical and theoretical study of the origin and development of Gothic literature during the Romantic period.)
- Robertson, F. (1994) *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction*, Oxford: Clarendon. (Considers the historical novels of Walter Scott in relation to the eighteenth-century Gothic romance.)

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

GOTHIC POETRY, 1700–1900



David Punter

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed . . .

P.B. Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"

(1816) (1968: 531)

Thus Percy Shelley in 1816. One might consider this to be a litany of Gothic themes and images: ghosts, caves and ruins, the "fearful," the "departed dead," poison. One might also recall that this poem, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," was written at much the same time as Mary Shelley's iconic Gothic text, *Frankenstein* (1818). The passage also raises some of the crucial questions and doubts about Gothic, and especially in the context of its relationship with Romanticism, for the Gothic, as we tend to understand it now, shares many features – thematic, chronological, psychological – with the Romantic movement. Yet Gothic has mainly been seen, from its classic incarnations in the novels of Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Charles Maturin and so many others, through to its later manifestations in the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Algernon Blackwood, M.R. James as well as, again, so many others, as naturally cognate with prose fiction, if only because the effects of suspense and the uncanny to which the Gothic seems naturally allied require a certain space, a certain arena within which these effects can be displayed and work their spell on the reading audience.

And so one question might be: what can Gothic poetry possibly be? Another possibly contradictory one would be: is it not possible that all poetry is Gothic, in some sense of the word, in that, at least, it challenges naturalistic narrative movement, and thus continually produces ghosts or phantoms for our inspection? Poetry, we might say, induces doubt; it can never, or very rarely, produce enough context for us as readers to lay our doubt to rest. With Geoffrey Chaucer's depiction of characters; with Alexander Pope's satirized victims; with Robert Browning's articulate psychopaths – we might in each case say that there is never enough evidence to go

on; we are required to fill in the gaps, to engage with doubt – and that doubt, so crucial to the Gothic, is also particularly characteristic of the period in which the Gothic, in the classic sense in which we now appreciate it, was born: doubt as to the scope and limits of human reason, doubt as to the eventual potential reach of a fully centered metaphysic, doubt as to whether social structures, from institutionalized religion to gender roles to the prospect of new forms of labor, were “naturally” handed down or were effects of power which were only beginning to be glimpsed.

And so we might helpfully begin an account of Gothic poetry not from the omnipresent anti-canon of ghosts, phantoms, apparitions – although of course we shall come across all of these shortly, lying in wait for us behind badly closed curtains, presenting themselves as unbelievably rattly skeletons, or as reminders of death and the sickness unto death – but from doubt. Gothic poetry is doubtful and doubting: the words are interestingly different. Among the earliest doubts with which we have to be concerned here, bearing in mind that the beginning point, the point of dubious origin, of this essay is 1700, are those which beset and generated the “Graveyard poetry” of the early eighteenth century. The most obvious example is the very long, complex and intellectually brilliant (in my opinion) poem by Edward Young called *Night Thoughts* (1742–45); but space is (as always) short, and very long poems, from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) to Alfred Lord Tennyson’s *Idylls of The King* (1856–85), have borne the price of a shortening of cultural attention; they remain, if at all, as we may say, mere ghosts of themselves.

Here, then, is instead a passage from the Graveyard poet Robert Blair’s far shorter poem, the appropriately titled “The Grave” (1743), and I should at this point say that all the examples I have chosen for this essay, with one exception, are from Caroline Franklin’s *Longman Anthology of Gothic Verse* (2011):

How shocking must thy Summons be, O Death!
To him that is at Ease in his Possessions;
Who counting on long Years of Pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnish’d for that World to come!
In that dread Moment, how the frantick Soul
Raves round the Walls of her Clay Tenement . . .
(Franklin 2011: 29)

Despite the ministrations of religion (Blair was a Christian minister), or perhaps, in some more interesting sense, because of them, we are always unprepared for death. So far, perhaps, so obvious; but what is fascinating about Graveyard poetry is not that it points in a general way to our own mortality but that it dwells *upon and within* it, constituting a fascinated inspection of the moment of, or perhaps immediately preceding, the fatal event. Thus, although we may not immediately associate poetry with the Gothic, if we think further about this we might conclude that, insofar as Gothic is to do with death, and this can hardly be in doubt since the (insubstantial) bulk of the Gothic panoply is precisely to do with that which succeeds, and that which does not succeed, death, then poetry, with its sudden, darting insights which require little in terms of evidence of substantiation, is far better equipped to register what we might refer to as the “Gothic senses”; which, we might argue, some of the major canonical religions with their investments in hymns, chants, repetitions have

always known. These may perhaps, indeed, be devices to allay or at least postpone doubt.

Blair's poem continues, of course; it may have a message, but its vocabulary ("Blood," "Horror," "Murth'rer," "dark and noisome Grave") seems in some ways to be at odds with this message. Certainly, as various commentators have mentioned, there seems very little of what we might call the consolation of the Christian resurrection here. We might therefore think about the peculiar sense in which Gothic poetry is actually more clearly in touch with the bodily, the physical, than its more idealistic counterparts. Gothic poetry may deal with ghosts, revenants and the rest; but it sometimes has also to do with a close relation with physical mutability and decay.

Gothic is of the soul (the phantomatic, the unseen, the fleeting) but it is also of the body (the horror, the blood, the distortion of the frame). This is probably, in fact, a reasonable account of the continuing appeal of Gothic right up to the present day, when it is undergoing the latest in a rolling series of resurrections; but let us return to the genre and period under discussion, and turn to a stanza from James Hogg's poem, "Superstition" (1815):

But oh! if ancient cemetery was near,
Or cairn of harper murdered long ago,
Or wandering pedlar for his hoarded gear,
Of such, what glen of Scotland doth not know?
Or grave of suicide, upon the brow
Of the bleak mountain, withered all and gray;
From these I held as from some deadly foe:
There have I quaked by night and mused by day;
But chiefly where I weened the bard or warrior lay.
(Franklin 2011: 138)

The ghostly, the phantomized relics of the past, Hogg is saying, are all too common. Of course, what he is also saying, is that they are more common within certain nations or within certain cultural traditions than in others: in this case they will form the very terrain – historical, topographical, cultural – of Scotland, as other Gothic writers have asserted of variously subjugated "nations." There is, after all, nothing so common as death: we tend to think of it as very rare, but then we suffer from a kind of mass delusion about death, as though it happens to other people, or happens to old people, or happens to people who are a long way away. It happens, Hogg reminds us, and perhaps other poets of the Gothic also remind us, constantly, all the time; it is the bedrock of our common existence. What is actually more Gothic: the fearful reminder of our common heritage of demise, or our weird forgetting of our own destiny? Is it between these two poles that doubt arises, doubt as to our memory and our forgetfulness, doubt as to whether and how we might be emotionally roused by the thoughts of the dead: our own thoughts of the dead, but also the thoughts that the dead might be having about us.

The Gothic, from its very inception, has had to do with the antique, with the precursor, with that which underlies the smooth terrain of the present, whatever the present, the fleeting soul of evanescence, might be. It has refused to allow the

convenient fiction that a present patina of reason can in some way suppress or subdue the potential uprisings of the past. And obviously nations with a history of “uprisings,” particularly ones which have not achieved their goals (if it is ever possible to remember what those goals were) will generate a specific repertoire of Gothic images attached to particular past moments. Gothic, as has often been said, is a distorted recollection; but equally, all recollection is distorted recollection.

What has this specifically to do with poetry? One way to approach that question would be to consider, as Hogg enjoins us to, the role of the bard in cultural history. Another would be to remind ourselves of how the poets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, themselves for the most part well read in and influenced by Graveyard poetry, which they esteemed much more highly than we tend to do now, approached these questions of the discarded past and what remains to rise up against us, as also the questions of what it might mean to find oneself confronting a phantom from that past: one’s own or, equally frequently, somebody else’s.

In S.T. Coleridge’s “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” (1798), the most remarkable thing about the entire poem might be said to be that the phantom, the revenant whom the wedding guest has to confront, or at least endure, is not even a ghost from his own (the guest’s) past. It appears that he is in no way implicated in this “grave” story, but of course he becomes so, as do we readers, to such an extent that, culturally, the ancient mariner can be no more forgotten than, for example, Job or the prophet Isaiah. But let us, for ourselves, attempt the impossible task of forgetting the ancient mariner; let us instead consider what is arguably, because it deals directly with vampires, body horror, sexual disgust, as well as, emblematically, what is emerging as our Gothic keynote, doubt, Coleridge’s *more* Gothic poem, “Christabel” (1816). Here are what are often taken (quite correctly) to be the crucial lines which underscore the strange unnaturalness of the relation posited between the two main, and some would say only, characters: the “innocent” Christabel and the more doubtful, and perhaps witchlike, Geraldine, the first figure mentioned in this extract:

Beneath the lamp the lady bow’d,
And slowly roll’d her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudder’d, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
And she is to sleep by Christabel.

(Franklin 2011: 287)

And why not, we might ask? Perhaps this woman is suffering from the after-effect of physical wounding; perhaps she is in some way disabled; perhaps she has no designs on Christabel other than for comfort and sharing. Yet this would of course be, perhaps willfully, to mis-take the implications of the lines, which are to portray the horror of the juxtaposition of the perfect and the imperfect body.

And here is where doubt enters in again: for, firstly, no body is perfect, but secondly, and more importantly, every body is in a state of transition, from the liquid of the amniotic fluid, through the comparative firmness of the body as it evolves from the baby through to maturity, through to its again comparative lack of stability as old age sets in, through to, despite the brief and transient stage of *rigor mortis*, the deliquescence of the corpse from which the thought and rhetoric of coffin and fire try ineffectually to preserve us (Tibetan sky burial may be a better way).

But of course I am being naïve: whatever Coleridge is up to in “Christabel,” it is not only about existential or metaphysical doubt, it is also about something which we might call “perversion.” We need not mean this in a directly sexual sense, and indeed we might not care to do so, for it would be very difficult indeed in an age which has absorbed Freud into the mainstream, largely forgotten Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and no longer cares to read the Marquis de Sade, to establish without unnecessary digression what “perversion” might mean, despite Jacques Lacan’s attempts; but that does not imply that Gothic poetry has not attempted to do so.

Let us consider, for example, Matthew Lewis’s “Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogine” – and it would be difficult to think of a Gothic novelist who was more closely implicated in issues of perversion than Lewis. The “ballad” actually appears within *The Monk* (1796); this context, and the words of the poem itself, establish that it is meant, in a way, as a parody, as a satirical commentary on such precursor Gothic poems as Gottfried Bürger’s “Lenore” (1774), and this in turn points to an important feature of the Gothic: namely how closely entwined the tragic and the comic are, even in Gothic’s heyday. Indeed, these are not the only things which are entwined: when the jilted Alonzo fulfills his promise to appear at the fickle Imogine’s wedding feast,

... his arms round the lady he wound,
While loudly she shriek’d in dismay;
Then sank with his prey though the wide-yawning ground:
Nor ever again was Fair Imogine found,
Or the spectre who bore her away.

(Franklin 2011: 323)

It is evident from these lines that, even by as early as 1796, the Gothic has become a recognizable set of conventions, to be manipulated as a series of stock images, many of which recur in the poem’s final stanza:

While they drink out of skulls newly torn from the grave,
Dancing round them pale spectres are seen:
Their liquor is blood, and this horrible stave
They howl: – “To the health of Alonzo the Brave,
And his consort, the False Imogine!”

(Franklin 2011: 323)

The transition from “fair” to “false” is all too recognizable as one of the typical patriarchal ploys of the Gothic; whether the hint of the word “imagine” – and thus “imagination” – behind the interestingly spelled “Imogine” is quite so pointed must

remain open to doubt, but at all events here we have what we might call a repertoire of Gothic poetry. There is, of course, nothing new under the sun, or under the pale and fickle moon, and this idea of the appearance of the specter at the feast goes back at least to Greek mythology, and is clear in early Chinese tales of the supernatural as well. But a question, or perhaps a doubt, remains, which is about the register in which such a poem might be read.

One can imagine it as a kind of Rabelaisian derangement, a caricature of transgression: but since, as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White and others have pointed out, transgression is itself precisely a form of caricature, this may not get us much farther (Stallybrass and White 1986). Or one may say that this “panoply” of skulls and specters is a tissue of worn-out clichés: Young himself had said as much several decades earlier, yet continued to exult darkly in the “truly” Satanic which might nonetheless appear at any moment from within the charade, from behind the scenes at what Poe would later emblematically refer to as the “masque of the red death.”

There is thus here a certain poise, a balance between fear and mockery. A more than obvious psychoanalytic reading would engage with issues of repression, and wonder about how the jaunty rhythms, the clunky rhymes, might serve partially to obscure the difficulty of the subject-matter present here as much as it is in “The Ancient Mariner.” This difficulty is about death and what survives death, and about the temporal stability of the promise, which is itself an emblem of the persistence of intellectual remembrance and the mind in general. In John Keats’s “La Belle Dame sans Merci” (1819), the difficult things, the “dark materials,” are directly connected to the ambiguities of Romanticism itself, at least as we might say these ambiguities as connected to death, as they are by cultural historians such as Denis de Rougemont.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is wither’d from the lake,
And no birds sing.

(Franklin 2011: 492)

What indeed. Well, one answer would be that the “wight” (or possibly “knight-at-arms,” a version which seems justified by the later reference to the “pacing steed”) has suffered from a vision from which it is impossible to come back. He has, like the ancient mariner and many another Gothic traveller, glimpsed a land – we may call it a land of “faerie,” although it is known by many other names – from which there can be no true return. It is not so much that he has travelled to or through that land; it is more that the land has travelled through him and left him bereft, emptied out, alone in a world of apparent “reality” which appears as shadowy to him as, no doubt, that “other” land would appear shadowy to those who have never experienced it.

And so “reality” falls under the shadow; or, to put it another way, we experience doubt. All that has seemed solid melts into air: we now tend to think of this at least in part as a phenomenon of modernity, but of course it is also a feature of ancient legend, of which the Gothic is itself, in one sense, a revival. And like the postmodern, the Gothic often has to do with the maze, the labyrinth, and certainly “La Belle Dame sans Merci” is a poem from which there is no escape, it is a brief and sublime instance of the inevitability of the repetition:

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cry'd – “La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

(Franklin 2011: 494)

The word rings out and repeats: “pale,” “pale,” “pale.” Here the richness, the vividness and ornamentation which we associate with Romanticism finds a kind of deathly response, a draining of color that reflects the draining of life, starvation. “And I awoke,” it is said; but has he awoken; would we even know, on this dried-up edge of the eternal lake, what awakening might mean? Do we ever really know, as Gothic so often insists, whether we have “returned” to reality, or whether we are enduringly inhabiting a dream?

But the tragic in the Gothic, as I have said, is inextricably tied to the comic and satirical, and nowhere more so than in Poe, most of whose tales, after all, may well be parodies: some of them, even, parodies of others of Poe's tales, or indeed parodies of themselves, such are the dense interweavings generated by Gothic's generic instability. Yet again, one could say that all of these possibilities are in one sense encompassed by the repetition, and the soul of repetition, Poe surreptitiously informs us, is the endlessly repetitive cry of the raven, and the “difference” that our imaginative hearing may infuse into it – under conditions of loneliness or deprivation; under conditions, perhaps, of insanity:

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door –
Only this, and nothing more.”

(Franklin 2011: 511)

And so the poem continues: a tissue of repetitions, an extraordinary virtuoso display of rhythm, mainly trochaic octasyllabics, and rhyme, which some readers have seen as building up to its terrible climax (the subject's apparent realization, not so much of the merely human loss of his lover as of the absolute unfreedom which will now continue to be his lot into an unimaginable and radically dehumanized future) while others have regarded it simply in the terms which Poe once offered, as a dry exercise in the possibilities of verse. In this ongoing difference, one might see the lineaments

of the broader argument about the Gothic: does repetition involve diminution or intensity?

All the poems I have so far mentioned involve one specific trope: namely, the intrusion of death into life. To say that thus baldly, of course, is to say nothing in particular: what else can death be but an intrusion into life? Sometimes, people speak of “untimely” or “premature” death; but such comments are difficult to bring to sense unless we are speaking of a residual belief in “threescore years and ten,” which, of course, must have been originally metaphorical given the radically shorter lifespan which would have been available at the time the relevant part of the Bible was written. But in Gothic in general, and in Gothic poetry more specifically, what we experience is the *immediacy* of such an intrusion, as well as something of an exploration of the complex guilts which assail us when in the presence, or present absence, of death.

Death, that of our loved ones, mostly, but also proleptically our own, is, so to speak, our own fault. In Gothic it is as though were we not burdened by this compulsion to repeat, to kill, to sacrifice, to worship the devil, we could live forever; Gothic is always on the edge, as in for example Maturin or Robert Louis Stevenson, of discovering the elixir of life. But within Gothic poetry there are darker, counter-vailing forces at work, and we often find them in the works of the most apparently respectable of poets. No British poet could emblemize respectability more conclusively than Tennyson (which presumably reveals what we may always have known, namely that respectability and depression are the two faces of Janus), yet he was capable not only of writing that great work of obsessive homosocial melancholia *In Memoriam* (1833–50) but also powerful sonnets of death and the afterlife like “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal” (1847):

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

(Tennyson 1991: 126–27)

Doubt and repetition: so far we have identified these as crucial features of Gothic poetry, ways of dealing with or at least addressing the dark materials, material and spiritual, which form the bedrock of such poetry. But what this sonnet reminds us of

is a further issue, which has to do with a need for mastery, for control. Tennyson here, of course, performs a translation: the attempted abjection of death turns, magically, into the abjection of the female. The presumably female addressee here is reduced to a mere aspect of the narrator's imagination: whether she is living or dead would hardly disturb the texture of the meditation.

Of course it could be argued, thinking of Thomas Hardy, for example, that such concerns have nothing to do with the critic: there are in poetry no persons, either living or dead, to disturb the texture of textuality. But what I think Gothic may do is to disturb the apparently bland and smooth surface of such critical assumptions. Lives leave their traces, and even the most calm of seas is disturbed by waves, and even the most serene of meditations is sometimes betroubled by a "glimmering": a relic of the past, a hint of the phantomatic, perhaps even more especially so when the strenuous attempt has been made to expel such troubling, perhaps even indecent, non-respectable, material, and even more especially when that material happens to be female. And of course the issue of male and female Gothic, whatever those vexed terms might mean, has come to a centrality in recent criticism, although perhaps at the expense of how one might consider Gothic in terms of a more various, a more diffuse perversion.

And so, under the sign of perversion, inevitably as the nineteenth century closes around us (to allude to Virginia Woolf) to A.C. Swinburne. There are many of Swinburne's poems which could be considered to touch upon Gothic themes: certainly many of them are concerned with death, and many of them again deal with extreme physical states. Much of Swinburne's always-observable venom was reserved for the Christian church, with what he saw as its frigid palliatives which prevented people from engaging with the full savor of life which can spring only from a continuing and "lively" sense of mortality. "After Death" (1866), however, is a peculiar poem even by Swinburne's peculiar standards: one piece of evidence for this is that its rhythms are far from perfect, which is remarkable in a poet whose mastery of rhythm has been argued to be greater than that of any other poet writing in English.

Our protagonist ("the dead man" – did Stevie Smith read this poem before she wrote "Not Waving but Drowning"?) is laid in his coffin, and cursed:

The first curse was in his mouth,
Made of grave's mould and deadly drouth.

The next curse was in his head,
Made of God's work discomfited.

The next curse was in his hands,
Made out of two grave-bands.

The next curse was in his feet,
Made out of a grave-sheet.

(Franklin 2011: 562)

Is this a children's skipping-game? Is it a corrupt version of an ancient ballad? In its spanning of simplicity and horror, perhaps it enacts again the instability of the

Gothic, the ever complex question of what truly frightens, and whether indeed words, or visual images, can actually do that at all. At all events, the dead man protests; the four boards of the coffin, who are his interlocutors, respond with what seems to be an extended riddle, or series of riddles. The dead man asks whether some ghastly fate has overtaken his family (in the old sense, including servants), and the boards reply that it has not. On the contrary, his family is doing just fine, but unfortunately:

The dead man answered thus:
“What good gift shall God give us?”

The boards answered him anon:
“Flesh to feed hell’s worm upon.”
(Franklin 2011: 563)

All is “power and greed and corruptible seed,” as Bob Dylan would put it many years later, hopes of forgiveness or redemption are but children’s play. Gothic is sometimes seem as reflecting a sense of divine injustice, but of course far more frequently it reflects a view of the consequences of ill deeds done but not forgotten. History, the history we take to be valid, will reshape events according the narratives we need, typically the narratives of the victors: Gothic introduces us to a different kind of memory, a repertoire of the past from which nothing can be erased, where all the forgettings of the past are capable of re-manifesting themselves: as ghosts, as revenants, as phenomena of the repetition. That, of course, could also be taken to be a description of Freud’s view of the unconscious.

It would probably be neither fair nor accurate to claim that Gothic poetry from 1700 to 1900 constitutes a unitary “tradition,” in any of the manifold usages of that vexed word. This is at least in part because it is difficult, given Gothic’s constant misgivings about origins, to think through Gothic as a tradition at all: it is instead involved in continual remaking, repetitions with difference, and is always haunted by the ghosts of its own pasts, the legends, the fairy-tales, the edges of history with which it is preoccupied: the “pre-occupations” which lay stake to their own space, lodged within the apparently stable house of any “occupied” institution. It is also because Gothic itself keeps on invading spaces which attempt to set limits around themselves; Gothic comes as a reminder that the boundaries between life and death are always malleable, permeable, penetrable.

But what one can say is that there is a Gothic impulse which pervades: I have alluded above to Stevie Smith, but of course were we to move to more recent poetry, then we would also need to consider Sylvia Plath, many of whose most emblematic poems, “Daddy” perhaps most clearly among them, engage with the vampiric, with ways in which the dead find some of their apparent fulfillment in preying on the susceptible bodies and minds of the living.

What one can also say is that, if we are to think that “Romanticism,” whatever that term might mean, spreads itself in its most obvious ways across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then it is also true that its most basic assumptions – about the primacy of the emotional life of the writer, about the ultimate significance of feeling, about the necessity of a kind of “incarnation” within the word – have

persisted and still persist into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this constellation, then, the persistence and recrudescence of Gothic themes – the intrusion of death, the need to host, however unwillingly, reminders of the past, the impossibility of expunging the notion of haunting – is hardly surprising, and is given further inflections through new “explanations” of this persistence, through, for example, new identifications of the sites and effects of trauma.

Gothic poetry is, then, about doubt: it is about doubt as to the limits of human thought; it is about the limits of the human in general; it is a series of attempts to cope with the omnipresence of the wound, the irruption of the deathly into the apparently perfected body. The “perfect” is an illusion; if we are to move beyond it, we need to remind ourselves of the realms where perversion and even, in some cases, torture prove to us that the body cannot provide its own remedies for its ills. Ghosts and phantoms are problematic, to be sure: but so too are physical distortions, corporeal malfunctions, and perhaps these are harder to talk about. Yet in the end maybe they are the same: the apparent misrepresentations of the human body which we find in Gothic are, in fact, full representations of that body as it in fact functions, never perfectly, always marked by the wound which is the precursor of death, what Poe referred to as “the Conqueror Worm.”

REFERENCES

- Franklin, C. (ed.) (2011) *The Longman Anthology of Gothic Verse*, Harlow: Pearson.
Shelley, P.B. (1968) *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, London: Oxford University Press.
Stallybrass, P. and White, A. (1986) *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London: Routledge.
Tennyson, Lord A. (1991) *Selected Poems*, ed. Aidan Day, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

FURTHER READING

- Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press. (A brilliant account of how modernity renders all previous notions of “solidity” and certainty diffuse and insubstantial.)
De Rougemont, D. (1983) *Love in the Western World*, 1940, trans. M. Belgion, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (A book which relativizes the whole notion of romantic love, assigning it to a particular period of western history.)
Krafft-Ebing, R. von (1965) *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1886, ed. F.S. Klaf, New York: Stein and Day. (Still standard account of the sexual perversions.)
Lewis, M. (1998) *The Monk*, 1796, ed. C. MacLachlan, Harmondsworth: Penguin. (One of the first and greatest of the classic Gothic novels.)
Shelley, M. (1998) *Frankenstein*, 1818, ed. M.K. Joseph, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Barely needs introduction, as one of the most widely read and most influential novels in the western canon.)
Woolf, V. (1993) *Orlando*, 1928, ed. B. Lyons, Harmondsworth: Penguin. (Written from the perspective of a character who apparently travels through different periods of history, and also changes gender as appropriate.)
Young, E. (1991) *Night Thoughts*, 1742–45, London: Folio Society. (The cardinal “Graveyard poem,” and a profound meditation on life, death and human destiny.)

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GOTHIC TRANSLATION

France, 1760–1830



Angela Wright

The English school can still be recognised by its subterranean spaces, its trapdoors and honest bandits who, from Radcliff [*sic*] to M. Dinocour [*sic*] have made us shiver with fear so many times. The power of these mysterious terrors has somewhat diminished, and if English novelists have nothing better to offer us, they must be given a taste of their own medicine.

(J.C.T. 1834: 296; my translation)

A small but tangible threat lurks in the tail of the final sentence of this review of *Marie de Bourgogne* (1833), a French translation of a novel by English author and historiographer George Payne Rainsford James. Writing in the literary and politic newspaper *Le Constitutionnel*, the French critic traces a direct line between the popular works of Ann Radcliffe and the French author Théophile Dinocourt, who, among many other works guaranteed to thrill, published *Le Conspirateur* in 1826. The reviewer insists upon the English provenance of these mysterious terrors, and implies that the country of origin accounts for their patent failure of imagination. “The English school *can still* be recognised,” he insists in a tone of exhaustion (my emphasis and translation). This fatigue was echoed by a number of French critics during the first part of the nineteenth century. For Philarète Chasles, “these [English] novels are indicative of the profound malady which has seized upon society” (Chasles 1846: 381; my translation). For Joseph-Marie Quérard, who assembled the multi-volume *La France littéraire*, the source of this contagion was similarly traceable to Ann Radcliffe’s “terrorist school” (Quérard 1826–42: 4.418). Such anxiety about the neglect of one’s national tradition seems curiously familiar. As I will go on to argue in the second section of this chapter, it reflects almost precisely the same types of concerns that were articulated in Britain in the eighteenth century concerning the corrosive influence of French culture upon English language and literature. The two-way traffic of anxiety between France and Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries speaks of the deep vein of literary reciprocity that existed between the two nations, a network of reciprocity that was tested and decried due to the political tensions that existed between them.

Whereas the early Gothic productions of Horace Walpole and William Beckford had attracted little attention in France, those of Ann Radcliffe were quickly welcomed and translated. *Les mystères d'Udolphé* was translated by Mlle Victorine de Chastenay in 1797. During that same year, hot from the press, M. Foulet translated *L'Italien, ou le Confessionnal des Pénitents noirs*; a further translation of *The Italian, Eléonore ou Rosalba*, followed suit in 1797. The commercial success of these first translations ensured that translators returned to plunder Radcliffe's earlier novels. In 1798, *Julia, ou les Souterrains du Château de Mazzini* was translated by Moyen from Radcliffe's second novel *A Sicilian Romance* (1790); in 1800, *La Forêt, ou l'Abbaye de Saint-Clair* was translated by Soulès from *The Romance of the Forest* (1792). So extensive was the success of these four translations that they were reprinted together in 1819, with *Les Châteaux d'Athlin et Dunbaque* [sic] added as a further incentive to purchase that edition. Victorine de Chastenay's translation of *Udolpho* became so particularly popular that it was republished again in 1840. Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) enjoyed a similarly swift translation and popular reception in France. The first translation, by a M. Deschamps in 1797, was swiftly supplemented by the anonymously translated *Le Jacobin espagnol, ou Histoire du Moine Ambrosio et de la Belle Antonia sa Soeur*. More publications of these versions appeared as late as 1811 in France.

We might glean several insights from these numerous and popular French translations of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis in the 1790s and early 1800s. The first concerns the longevity of France's fascination with these English Gothic novelists' works. Early translations of Radcliffe and Lewis's work were not only commercially successful during their time, but continued to be popular long after their original publication dates. The popularity of Radcliffe and Lewis, in fact, persisted far longer in France than it did in Britain, with many translations running to several different editions across different decades. Furthermore, as my opening example demonstrates, the immediate commercial successes of the numerous translations and adaptations of Radcliffe and Lewis in France also received significant attention in the French press, with periodicals such as *Le Constitutionnel*, the *Spectateur du Nord* and the *Décade philosophique* devoting considerable amounts of space to their examinations of the popularity of the "school of terror."

For Daniel Hall, the works of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis epitomize "the internationalisation of Gothic fiction and drama' precisely because the rapid translations of their work in turn inspired numerous dramatisations and adaptations" (Hall 2005: 65). Hall's work forms part of a growing body of scholarship that over the past decade has begun to revisit the formative role played by translation in the international circulation and creation of the Gothic. Terry Hale further argues that the literary Gothic is "forged in the crucible of translation" (Hale 2002: 23). In "Translation in Distress," Hale positions the Gothic as a "*product*" of the "process" of translation, and examines examples of both English translations of French texts, and the traffic in the opposite direction from England to France (Hale 2002: 17).

These recent critical visions of a two-way cargo of translation between England and France add a qualification to the earlier pioneering work undertaken by French critic Maurice Lévy. As its title suggests, Lévy's *Le roman gothique anglais* (1968) insists upon the Gothic as something that was exported from England to France. Elsewhere, Lévy supported his argument about the direction of this traffic by

producing a “calendar of translations” of English Gothic novels translated into French (Lévy 1974: 150–76). This “calendar” illustrated the abundance and exuberant variety of French translations of British Gothic novels that went well beyond those by Radcliffe and Lewis. Lévy’s insistence upon the one-way direction of this literary traffic, from Britain to France, was also shared by other French critics. While Jean Fabre, for example, maintains that the “roman noir” was already detectable as a related tradition to Britain’s Gothic, it was one that crucially remained for him set apart from its British counterpart (Fabre 1979: 167). The views espoused by Lévy and Fabre were undoubtedly formed by the early critiques of Radcliffe and Lewis which appeared in France in the early nineteenth century: *Le Constitutionnel* was, after all, at pains to trace the lineage of Dinocourt’s work back to Radcliffe, and if the critic predicted the return of the repressed in the form of a French literary monster coming to engulf the reputation of Radcliffe, it was only as a form of poetic justice for her works’ inauguration of the vogue for terror in France.

The reasons that underline these early, persuasive and enduring impressions of the “roman noir” and the “gothique” as discrete national literary traditions in France and Britain remain to be interrogated. In order to uncover how the “Gothic” came to be regarded as a specifically British export entirely independent of its neighboring counterpart, one must look as far back into national history as the Norman Conquest. Since the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, Britain’s perception of what Christopher Hill has so aptly described as its “Norman Yoke” played a part in denigrating the influence of all things from across the Channel (Hill 1958). The Norman Yoke extended its influence beyond military invasion and involved a perceived effeminization of English Culture. In *Ivanhoe* (1820), Walter Scott’s Saxon character Cedric articulates what he views as the pernicious effects of Norman culture, accounting for England’s military enslavement through its cultural bondage: “we became enervated by Norman arts long ere we fell under Norman arms. Far better was our homely diet, eaten in peace and liberty, than the luxurious dainties, the love of which hath delivered us as bondsmen to the foreign conqueror!” (Scott 1996: 227). For Scott’s Cedric, “Luxurious dainties” have crucially diminished the appetite for resistance in the Anglo-Saxon warrior. Scott’s depiction of this crisis was penned in 1820, from the comparative comfort of Britain’s defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815, a fact that might account for his portrayal of Cedric’s hostile view of Norman influence in *Ivanhoe* as flawed and outmoded. Scott illustrates the impossibility of a pure Anglo-Saxon culture at the end of the narrative with the marriage of his Norman hero Ivanhoe with the Saxon Lady Rowena.

Such resignation concerning the infiltration of French culture in Britain was not, however, so permissible during the eighteenth century. One can go as far back as the War of the Spanish Succession in the early eighteenth century (1701–14) to see how stridently any French borrowings were derided and repulsed. Joseph Addison in “The Present State of War,” for example, decried the French as the “constant, and most dangerous, enemies to the British Nation” (Addison 1708: i). Addison’s position gathered momentum in the long history of eighteenth-century conflicts between Britain and France. Samuel Johnson also decried lexical borrowing in the Preface to his *Dictionary* (1755). There, Johnson “warn[ed] others against the folly of naturalising useless foreigners to the injury of the natives,” further fretting that “The great pest of speech is frequency of translation” (Johnson 1755: 1.2). The consequence of

this, for Johnson, was that “Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been . . . deviating towards a *Gallick* structure and phraseology, from which it ought to be our endeavour to recal it” (Johnson 1755: 1.5). Uncomfortable with this Gallicization of the English language, Johnson criticized the central role that translation had played in this process. In the wake of the Seven Years War (1756–63), which saw France and Britain pitted against each other in the battle for the Americas, there was an even greater retrenchment against all things French. Historian Linda Colley, for example, observes that “Allowing Frenchisms to infiltrate the English language, importing French manufactured goods, polishing themselves ‘into a refined insincerity’ merely because it was fashionable were nothing less than cultural treason, a vicious squandering of true identity” (Colley 1992: 90). Manufactory and inventiveness, explains Colley, were encouraged to remain within Britain. From the War of the Spanish Succession up until the revolutionary years of the 1790s, during which the Gothic mode proliferated so rapidly in Britain, commentators remained alert to all instances of “cultural treason,” ever-ready to pounce upon any product that was deemed to have “squandered” British identity. By the 1790s, translation was identified as a “pest” by the virulently anti-Jacobin Reverend Thomas James Mathias in *The Pursuits of Literature* (Mathias 1798: 4.238).

With such widespread animus toward translation in eighteenth-century Britain, it comes as no surprise that so few French sources were detected in Britain’s emergent Gothic mode. As Charlotte Smith’s sister Catherine Anne Dorset and more recent critics such as Loraine Fletcher and Terry Hale have so ably charted, Smith’s early attempt at transparency in acknowledging her translation of *Manon Lescaut* by Prévost d’Exiles was so calumniated by the critic George Stevens that Smith’s publisher Cadell was obliged to withdraw it from sale (Smith 1786; Dorset 1834: 20–58; Fletcher 1998: 73; Hale 2002: 19–20). Clara Reeve subsequently proved more adept at concealing the French provenance of her work *The Exiles; or, Memoirs of the Count de Cronstadt* (1778). Her Preface to this novel denounced literary theft at considerable length, as Reeve claimed to have had a ghost story stolen from her during a journey. But it also concealed a larger secret: that her novel was in fact an unacknowledged translation of a French work by Baculard d’Arnaud. A tale of seduction and bigamy, *D’Almanzi* formed part of the sequel to d’Arnaud’s sentimental collection of tales *Les Épreuves du sentiment* (1773), and was published in 1776 in the fourth volume of *Suite des épreuves du sentiment* (1776). Sophia Lee also did not acknowledge the French provenance of the tale that she adapted for her novel *The Recess* (1783). Like Charlotte Smith, Lee returned to the earlier example of Prévost d’Exiles, this time adapting his *Le Philosophe anglais ou histoire de M. Cleveland* (1731–39) to focus upon a paranoiac tale of persecution recounted by the fictive twin daughters of Mary, Queen of Scots, who are haunted by Queen Elizabeth I.

As the examples offered above illustrate, the French sources from which the British Gothic romance develops are not necessarily what we may now recognize as distinctly “Gothic.” Writing in the 1810s, it was John Colin Dunlop who first made a connection between the sentimental tradition in French literature and the English Gothic novel (Dunlop 1888). James R. Foster pursued this link in the first part of the twentieth century, arguing for the especial significance of Prévost d’Exiles in the formation of the Gothic mode (Foster 1927 and 1949). The diverse authorship of

some of the most prominent and well-known French authors of the long eighteenth century, including Voltaire, Diderot, Prévost d'Exiles, Madame de Tencin, Baculard d'Arnaud, the Marquis de Sade, the Swiss Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Genlis, provided inspiration for the development of the Gothic tradition in England. To group these writers together under a collective literary tradition is a perilous enterprise, but one all-encompassing term which Dunlop, Foster, and, most recently, Diane Long Hoeveler all call upon is the “sentimental” tradition (Dunlop 1888; Foster 1927 and 1949; Hoeveler 2010: 14). Commenting on the “sentimental,” Diane Long Hoeveler has recently noted that “the gothic bears strong affinities with the discourse of the Sentimental as it operated in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, and certainly both genres relied on a fairly limited number of historical, mythic, ballad and even biblical plots” (Hoeveler 2010: 14).

Of the diverse authors that I have cited above, those who provide the most obvious links to the English Gothic tradition are Madame de Tencin's *Mémoires du Comte de Comminge* (1735) and the gruesome graveyard settings, in part inspired by Tencin, that Baculard d'Arnaud later adapted in the drama *Les Amans malheureux, ou le Comte de Comminge* (1765). Despite these early, isolated examples of Gothic setting, this overtly “sentimental” form of French literature may not necessarily resemble what we have come to appreciate as Gothic. As I have argued elsewhere, however, its influence is discernible not only in isolated examples of British Gothic novels during this period, but throughout the entire early Gothic canon (Wright 2013). While Ann Radcliffe, for example, pays overt homage to a great British literary tradition in her epigraphic practices, citing from Shakespeare, Thomson, Beattie and many others, her writing is more covertly indebted to this continental form of sentimental writing, using and adapting the arguments of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Genlis in particular with care and discernment (Wright 2008 and 2013). Why Ann Radcliffe took such pains to cloak the continental provenance of the more sentimental and philosophical vein of thinking in her fiction under the weight of her allusions to Shakespeare, Beattie, Thomson and others is of especial interest. It is difficult for us, as twenty-first-century readers, to estimate the impact that the treason trials of the 1790s and the temporary ban of the importation of texts from France in 1793 may have had on any author's practice. But while Charlotte Smith, Elizabeth Inchbald and Mary Robinson were accused by the Reverend Mathias of near-treasonable practices in *The Pursuits of Literature*, Radcliffe escaped relatively uncensored, perhaps thanks in part to her careful engagement with national literary icons.

At first glance, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* displays none of Radcliffe's caution. In his “Advertisement” to the novel, Lewis acknowledged a range of continental sources:

The first idea of this Romance was suggested by the story of the *Santon Barsisa*, related in The Guardian. – The *Bleeding Nun* is a tradition still credited in many parts of Germany; . . . The *Water-King*, from the third to the twelfth stanza, is the fragment of an original Danish ballad – And *Belerma und Durandarte* is translated from some stanzas to be found in a collection of old Spanish poetry, which contains also the popular song of *Gayferos and Melesindra*, mentioned in Don Quixote. – I have now made a full avowal of all the plagiarisms of which I

am aware myself; but I doubt not, many more may be found, of which I am at present totally unconscious.

(Lewis 2004: 38)

The sources that Lewis did cite were – or so he may be pardoned for thinking – carefully selected for the political climate in England in 1796, for he avoided any direct reference to France. The story of *Santon Barsisa* that Lewis claims is his first source, for example, is traced back to Addison and Steele’s use of it in *The Guardian* in 1714, and not to the Frenchman François Pétis de la Croix’s *Turkish Tales* (1707–8). The *Guardian*’s adaptation of *Santon Barsisa* secured de la Croix’s version of a saintly monk being tempted into rape and murder by the devil in the service of a Protestant and patriotic British reading audience. It prefaced the narrative of diabolical temptation with the observations that it would appeal to “a great many People of plain and virtuous minds” as “The Moral to be drawn from it is entirely Christian” (Addison and Steele 1714: 148). Lewis’s tracing of his source to *The Guardian* demonstrated a degree of caution in pleasing this audience, for there were many more recent editions of the tale. But his omission in naming the original and well-recognized French author-translator of these tales was undoubtedly calculated. Whereas in 1714, the year when the War of the Spanish Succession concluded, Addison and Steele had no qualms about acknowledging the authorship of François Pétis de la Croix, by 1796, in the context of another war which pitted the English against the French (the war of the first coalition), Lewis deemed it unwise to acknowledge the Frenchman’s influence.

The presence of other French sources is also discernable within *The Monk*. While Denis Diderot’s *La religieuse* (1796) had not been translated into English by 1796 – to the horror of many British reviewers, it was translated in 1797 – Lewis, himself an able linguist, would have been capable of reading Diderot’s seductive tale of enforced conventual vows in the original French. As his correspondence with his mother also illustrates, during his stay in Paris in 1791, Lewis watched a number of revolutionary plays such as Jacques-Marie Boutet de Monvel’s *Les Victimes cloîtrées*, which he later adapted as *Venoni, or the novice of St Mark’s* (Boutet de Monvel, first performed in 1791; Lewis, 1809). The Marquis de Sade’s frequently reprised tale of a young novice’s continual violation at the hands of French monks, published in its first iteration as *Les Infortunes de la vertu*, and in its second, more violent version as *Les Malheurs de la vertu*, was also undoubtedly consumed by Lewis to some extent, and reproduced in Ambrosio’s violent assault upon Antonia toward the conclusion of the novel. The anonymously produced *Laura; Or, Original Letters. A sequel to the Eloisa of J.J. Rousseau. From the French* (1790) also seems to have offered Lewis significant inspiration for the opening of his novel. *Laura* offers a scene in a cathedral, just as in the opening to *The Monk*, where a benign masculine spectator (Lord Bomston) witnesses an unprotected female being dragged before a tribunal of Capuchin monks:

Suddenly, an unexpected noise struck upon my ear, and a door of the temple was opened. I beheld a capuchin enter; then, a second leading a woman by the hand; and then, a third, who shut the door after them. I withdrew to a distance. They advanced toward the great altar, dragging the trembling female, who was

covered by a long veil. When she was near the altar, Ah, God! She cried – and instantly I recognized Laura.

(Anon. 1790: 100)

The monastic setting, the unwilling female convert, and the helpless male spectator who watches the scene of enforced conventual vows all foreshadow Lewis's own later treatment of Agnes di Medina's ill-fated attempt to escape from the clutches of the Prioress and Abbott Ambrosio of the Capuchin order in Madrid.

As Lewis's own advertisement to *The Monk* acknowledges, tracing the "source" of any novel is a perilous enterprise, for the tributaries of inspiration are numerous. So, too, is often the case with translations. For the anonymously published *Laura*, as the British Library catalogue indicates, was first published in German, and composed by a German author. Friedrich August Clemens's original work was entitled *Die Begebenheiten Bomstons in Italien*. It was subsequently translated into French by the Swiss author Gabriel Seigneux de Correvon, but Correvon made no reference to the German original. Inspired, then, by Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* which was originally published in France, written by a German, and then translated back into French by another Swiss author prior to its translation and importation into England, the sheer cosmopolitanism of this Rousseauvian sequel illustrates the ease with which literature and ideas were traded across the continent in 1790. It also illustrates that the market for an adaptation of Rousseau, "from the French," continued to be viewed as a marketable commodity in England in 1790. Even if the self-appointed literary censors such as Mathias policed the importation of texts into Britain, their attempts to staunch the appetite for all things French were, at best, belated. In spite of the military animosity that prevailed between Britain and France in the course of the eighteenth century, there is considerable evidence to suggest that that literary admiration endured too. James Raven, for example, has demonstrated how, up until 1795, the large majority of novelistic translations in England came from the French, with six titles in 1790 coming from French and only one from German (Raven 2000: 56–58). This admiration is something that Robin Eagles also helpfully foregrounds in his study *Francophilia in English Society, 1748–1815*. There, Eagles (2000) argues that "aristocratic Francophilia and cosmopolitanism" were just as influential as the Protestant, commercially motivated patriotism that gave rise to the francophobia of the eighteenth century. Translation (acknowledged or unacknowledged), plagiarism and adaptation all testify to the literary admiration that prevailed between Britain and France, and the Gothic novel played no small part in this exchange of ideas. If the "Gothic" novel seems to be a peculiarly British product, as French critics have insisted since its appearance in France, then this is because of the significant, strategic role that it played in maintaining literary reciprocity. The intertextual nature of these early so-called "British" Gothic novels speaks to this covert literary admiration. Negotiating the fears and anxieties of both military and cultural invasion, the "roman gothique anglais" remains profoundly indebted to its French predecessors. In turn, the enthusiastic, early translations of Radcliffe, Lewis and their contemporaries in France speak of a French audience in the 1790s that was willing to embrace the works of its English counterpart. Only later did the French critics turn upon this so-called usurper of the French republic of letters, anxious in their turn about cultural invasion. The republication of Victorine

de Chastenay's translation of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as late as 1840, however, tells us that for the French readership, the "power of these mysterious terrors" continued to prevail well into the nineteenth century.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1790) *Laura; Or, Original Letters. A sequel to the Eloisa of J.J. Rousseau. From the French*, London.
- Addison, J. (1708) *The Present State of the War, and the Necessity of an Augmentation, consider'd*, London.
- Addison, J. and Steele, R. (1714) "Santon Barsisa," *The Guardian*, no. 148.
- Arnaud, F.T.M. de Baculard d'. (1765) *Les Amans malheureux, ou le Comte de Comminge, drame en tris actes et en vers*, London.
- (1774–83), *Nouvelles historiques*, 3 vols, Paris.
- (1815) *Oeuvres d'Arnaud*, 3 vols, Paris.
- Boutet de Monvel, J.M. (1792) *Les Victims cloîtrées*, Paris.
- Chasles, P. (1846) *Le Dix-huitième siècle en Angleterre*, Paris.
- Colley, L. (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Diderot, D. (1968) *La Religieuse*, 1796, ed. R. Desné, Paris: Garnier Flammarion.
- Dinocourt, T. (1826) *Le Conspirateur* Paris.
- Dunlop, J.C. (1888) *The History of Fiction*, 1814, 2 vols, ed. H. Wilson, London: Bell.
- Dorset, C.A. (1834) "Charlotte Smith," in Sir Walter Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. 4, Edinburgh: Cadell, 20–58.
- Eagles, R. (2000) *Francophilia in English Society, 1748–1815*, London: Macmillan.
- Fletcher, L. (1998) *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Foster, J.R. (1927) "The Abbé Prévost and the English Novel," *PMLA* 42 (1927), 443–64.
- (1949) *History of the Pre-Romantic novel in England*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Fabre, J. (1979) *Idées sur le roman de Madame de Lafayette au Marquis de Sade*, Paris: Klincksieck.
- Hale, T. (2002) "Translation in Distress: Cultural Misappropriation and the Construction of the Gothic" in A. Horner (ed.) *European Gothic*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 17–38.
- Hall, D. (2005) *French and German Gothic Fiction in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Hill, C. (1958) *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, London: Secker and Warburg.
- Hoeveler, D.L. (2010) *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780–1820*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Johnson, S. (1755) *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols, London.
- Lee, S. (1783 and 1785) *The Recess, or A Tale of Other Times*, 3 vols, London.
- Lewis, M.G. (2004) *The Monk: A Romance*, 1796, eds D.L. Macdonald and K. Scherf, Ontario: Broadview.
- (1809) *Venoni, or The Novice of St Mark's* London.
- Lévy, M. (1968) *Le Roman "gothique" anglais 1764–1824*, Toulouse: Gallimard.
- (1974) "English Gothic and the French Imagination: A Calendar of Translations 1767–1828," in G.R. Thompson (ed.) *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism*, Pullman: Washington State University Press, 150–76.

- Mathias, T.J. (1798) *The Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues*, 8th edn, London.
- Pétis de la Croix, F. (1708) *Histoire de la sultane de Perse et des visirs* (1707), trans. *Turkish tales; consisting of several extraordinary adventures: with the history of the sultaness of Persia, and the visiers. Written originally in the Turkish language, by Chec Zade, for the use of Amurath II. And now done into English*. London.
- Prévost d'Exiles. (1978) *Le Philosophe anglais ou histoire de M. Cleveland* in *Oeuvres de Prévost*, Vol. 2, ed. J. Sgard, Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble.
- Quérard, J.M. (1826–42) *La France littéraire, ou Dictionnaire bibliographique des savants, historiens, et gens de lettres de la France, &c*, 14 vols, Paris.
- Radcliffe, Ann. (1794) *La Forêt, ou l'Abbaye de Saint-Clair, traduit de l'anglais sur la seconde édition*, Paris.
- (1797) *Les Mystères d'Udolphé, par Anne Radcliffe. Traduit de l'anglais sur la troisième édition* [par Comtesse Victorine de Chastenay-Lanty], 4 vols, Paris.
- (1798) *L'Italien, ou le confessional des pénitens noirs, par Anne Radcliffe, traduit par André Morellet*, 4 vols, Paris.
- (1819) *Julia, ou les souterrains du château de Mazzini, par Anne Radcliffe, traduit de l'anglais sur la seconde édition*, 2 vols, Paris.
- Raven, J. (2000) "The Novel Comes of Age," in P. Garside, J. Raven and R. Schöwlering (eds) *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, vol. I, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 15–121.
- Sade, D.A.F. de. (1973) *Oeuvres complètes du Marquis de Sade*, eds. A. Le Brun and J-J. Pauvert, 16 vols, Paris: Pauvert.
- Scott, W. (1996) *Ivanhoe*, 1820, ed. I. Duncan, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C. (1786) trans. *Manon L'escaut* by A.F. Prévost. London.
- Tencin, Madame de. (1735) *Mémoires du Comte de Comminge*, Paris.
- J.C.T (1834), review of *Marie de Bourgogne, Le Constitutionnel*, 296.
- Wright, A. (2008) "How do we ape thee, France! The cult of Rousseau in women's Gothic writing of the 1790s," in A. Horner and S. Zlosnik (eds) *Le Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 67–83.
- (2013) *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764–1820: The Import of Terror*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FURTHER READING

- Hale, T. (2002) "French and German Gothic: The Beginnings," in J. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 63–84. (A survey of how the Gothic was translated and circulated between Britain, France and Germany.)
- Hall, D. (2005) *French and German Gothic Fiction in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Bern: Peter Lang. (An in-depth study of the circulation of literary texts between Britain, France and Germany which contains commentary upon the reviewing practices in France and Germany.)
- Hoeveler, D.L. (2010) *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780–1820*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press. (A study of the circulation of the Gothic across Europe in prose and drama, Hoeveler's book argues for its increasing importance in the increasingly secular Europe.)
- Lévy, M. (1974) "English Gothic and the French Imagination: A Calendar of Translations 1767–1828," in G.R. Thompson (ed.) *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism*, Pullman: Washington State University Press, 150–76.

(Annotation of translations from English Gothic novels to French, this contains some painstaking and to-date under-researched items.)

Wright, A. (2013) *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764–1820: The Import of Terror*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A study of the Gothic's rise in the wake of the Seven Years War, and its disguised incursions into the realm of translation.)

CHAPTER TWENTY

GOTHIC TRANSLATION

Germany, 1760–1830



Barry Murnane

THE CRUCIBLE OF TRANSLATION

“The translation of my *Ghostseer* is readable, apart from a few passages which the good friend did not understand” (Schiller 1954: 424; my translation). Friedrich Schiller’s comments on an unofficial French translation of his *Schauerroman*, *Der Geisterseher* (1786–89), not only provide a telling commentary on the complicated patterns of cultural transfer relating to the production, translation and reception of the Gothic around 1800, but also underline the difficulties in conducting a structured analysis of these cross-border processes at the close of the Enlightenment. As popular and mass-produced literature, Gothic novels suffered more than most from the lack of established copyright laws, and were prone to unofficial imprints and translations whose origins are almost impossible to trace. Yet Schiller’s words also point to another side of these opaque transfer patterns that highlight precisely what Michel Espagne has identified as the inescapable change of semantic contextualization related to translation (Espagne and Werner 1985; Espagne 2006). Perhaps by mistake, Baron de Brock’s French translation has quite obviously involved some uncanny shift of semantic content with which Schiller is uncomfortable. Such transformations of texts prove central in the establishment of a distinct Gothic aesthetic in critical and literary discourse around 1800, as I wish to outline in the following survey of Anglo-German cultural transfer in the late-Enlightenment period.

If translation always includes an element of transformation, this turns out to be an integral part of the wave of uncanny texts that arises as part of what Avril Horner has fittingly named a “spirited exchange” between Britain, France and Germany from the late 1760s onward (see Horner 2002; on Germany in particular see Hale 2002). If contemporary commentary is a reliable yardstick, then German literature enjoyed a privileged position within this exchange. When Jane Austen completed *Northanger Abbey* in 1798, her parody of the taste and narrative structure of the Gothic novel not only referred specifically to Karl Friedrich Kahlert’s *The Necromancer* (1792) and Karl Grosse’s *Horrid Mysteries* (1796a); her list of “horrid novels” extended to English works obviously hoping to profit from the German influx, including Francis Lathom’s *The Midnight Bell* (1798), supposedly a “German

story founded on incidents of real life,” Eliza Parson’s “German story” that is *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793), as well as her “German tale,” *The Mysterious Warning* (1796) (Austen 1993: 21). The “German School” simultaneously becomes synonymous for all that is negative about home-grown British culture, as is reflected in the plot of *Northanger Abbey* itself: Catherine Morland must learn that the horrid stories of intrigue, conspiracy and murder she has read of in such novels are not transferable to British culture. Catherine may believe that Henry Tilney and his father have killed her prospective mother-in-law and are out to imprison her, but she has to learn that the “dreadful nature of the suspicions” she has are the product of a “riot in [her] own brain” brought on by her reading habits (Austen 1993: 128, 72).

Accordingly, accounts of the developing Gothic novel have pointed to reciprocal processes of translation and germination of Gothic tastes between Britain and Germany following Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. In older surveys, it was assumed that the German translation of Walpole’s novel inspired a generation of Gothic writers – including Goethe, Naubert, Schiller and Grosse – to produce the brand of terrifying “German” romances which flooded the English market in the 1790s, although recently this view has been corrected (Hall 2005: 50–52). Walpole’s *Otranto* obviously struck a chord among British readers schooled in Graveyard poetry, Shakespeare and Percy’s *Reliques*; the same cannot, however, be said of German audiences when Walpole’s novel came to be translated as *Seltsame Begebenheiten in dem Schlosse Otranto* in 1768, a text which Hadley mentions as a “forgotten edition” (Hadley 1978: 112). *Otranto* quite obviously sank without a trace in Germany, and there are important reasons for this. The introduction of “*seltsame Begebenheiten*” [strange events], into the German title (the English simply reads “a story,” and from the second edition, “a Gothic story”) may be motivated by the events within the narrative, yet in the Enlightened discourse in Germany of the late 1760s, the tenability of ghosts within literary narratives *in principle* was still a matter of discussion, as Lessing’s apologia for Shakespeare’s use of ghosts in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767–69, Hamburg Dramaturgy) shows. In focusing primarily on the “*seltsame Begebenheiten*,” the German version automatically reduces the claim for literary seriousness and orientates the translation toward the lower end of the Enlightenment publishing-market of moral weeklies and calendars. After all, such tales of “strange events” were the stock components of the didactic pamphlets and calendars designed to educate the masses out of their unenlightened superstitions. The negative response of the leading review organ, *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, underlines this, writing that Walpole’s work is “*nichts als ein unendliches Gewirr über zusammenhängender Träume . . . die anstatt die Einbildungskraft zu belustigen, solche nur ermüden*” (Anon. 1768: 363–64) [“no more than an endless confusion about related dreams . . . that exhaust rather than amuse the imagination”] (my translation). In translation, the focus shifts to the wonderful (*das Wunderbare*) nature of these events which was an established but controversial mode of Enlightenment aesthetics in Germany, in the process of which the translation becomes not so much the “*gothische Geschichte*” of the subtitle as a “*wunderbare Geschichte*” of strange happenings, and, as such, disappears out of view of the literary classes.

By the 1790s, this is quite clearly no longer the case. In 1794 F. Meyer published a new translation entitled *Die Burg von Otranto: eine gothische Geschichte* and by

1797 at least two other unofficial translations appear to have been in circulation (Hadley 1977). This renewed act of cultural transfer is only understandable if one considers the sea-change in German aesthetic discourse in the final third of the eighteenth century. A renewed interest in Gothic architecture, the Middle Ages and its art and literature can be traced back in Germany to the endeavors of Goethe and Herder in the 1760s, where this became a sign of national distinction against the French culture of the nobility, although this hallmark of the so-called “Storm and Stress Movement” is not itself part of German Gothic production in the narrower sense. This would go some way to explaining the widespread reception of the novel in general at the close of the 1790s: Goethe and Schiller even considered writing their own versions (Goethe 1888: 223–24). Likewise, Benedikte Naubert’s historical novels such as *Herrmann von Unna* (1788) and works such as Grosse’s *Der Genius* (1790–94) actually pre-date this new Walpole edition by several years, suggesting that the stimulus–response model of a British influence in Germany needs to be reconsidered: the reception of Walpole’s “first Gothic novel” had little importance for the autochthonic *Schauerroman* (Gothic novel) which emerged in the late 1780s.

In the new edition of 1794, both of Walpole’s Prefaces (from the first and second editions) are reprinted alongside Meyer’s own introductory Preface. These introductions are of some interest, as they show that for German audiences, the *Schauerroman* was by no means the purely anti-Enlightenment shocker-narrative that it has long been taken to be. Although traditional English accounts have focused on German Gothic as an anti-Enlightenment mix of diabolism and necromancy emerging in the mid-1790s, the predominant focus in these works on the psychological uncertainty pertaining to the uncanny actually suggests the continuing relevance of Enlightenment aesthetics as crucial to their conception. This can be seen in Walpole’s and Meyer’s Prefaces, with Walpole’s famous strategies for explaining the belief in ghosts and the supernatural in his novel (that is, that the events were set in an age of superstition) revealing an explained supernatural based on the concept of probability, a hallmark of rationalist Enlightenment poetics. This clearly undermines the images of blood-curdling German Gothic referred to above.

The term *Schauer* (shocking/shuddering) in *Schauerroman*, the German word for the Gothic novel, confirms this assumption, implying, as it does, an affective poetics which draws deliberately on discussions of the mind/body-dualism, with the shudder being understood as a bodily manifestation of mental/nervous horror (Murnane 2012: 11–13). This locates the aesthetics of the Gothic within the dominant anthropological paradigm of Germany’s late-Enlightenment philosophy (Barkhoff 2012). Insofar as these works focus on areas of social life and individual motivation that remained unaccounted for in earlier, more optimistic Enlightenment accounts of personality and reality, they actually take on an important role in anthropology’s “self-Enlightenment” of the Enlightenment (Godel 2011). However, they do so by persistently rejecting the last remnants of optimism and self-assuredness that the late Enlightenment still associated with reason, rationality and philosophy. Necromancy and the secret society, the two key themes of German Gothic to be found across most of its variants, are best understood in these terms. They take on the status of fictional media for real epistemological problems: namely the sense that the powers of reason are limited in assessing human intentions and social interaction (Barkhoff 2012), a

derangement of the supposedly solid Enlightened subject which remains central to German Gothic to the present day. As such, the *Schauerroman* looks backward toward the Enlightenment and forward toward modernity's interrogation of subjectivity and a poetics based on the productive powers of imagination. German Gothic thus negotiates the borders of Enlightenment and Romantic aesthetics in the threshold period of modernization (Koselleck 1972), emerging on the brink of modern social organization and subjectivity as a mode of literature which accompanies, uncannily mirrors and distorts modernization while also opening up modes of negotiating, criticizing and destabilizing concepts of quotidian reality and sovereign subjectivity.

However, this intellectual backdrop seems completely unfamiliar to English audiences of the 1790s and thereafter. Looking back on over 50 years of the British reception of German literature, Thomas Carlyle highlights a significant stereotyping of German writing in Britain as being loaded with "vulgar horrors, and all sorts of showy exaggeration" and which "is thought to dwell with peculiar complacency among wizards and ruined towers, with mailed knights, secret tribunals, monks, spectres, and banditti" (Carlyle 1827: 313). Carlyle's retrospect is well grounded, even if his complaints suggest the German influence has passed. In 1794, for example, *The British Critic* remarked that "We should be sorry to see an English original so full of absurdities" as *The Necromancer* (Boening 1977: 1.309), while the *Analytical Review* accused Germans of being "extravagant" and of "giving unbounded licence to . . . imagination" (Boening 1977: 1.315). In short, German Gothic and its burgeoning translation industry were both thematically and socially linked with depravity and degeneration.

Such polemical accounts of German writing actually obscure the real production and sources of the texts that Jane Austen's Catherine Morland and her real-life fellow readers consumed. It has been argued that such English accounts amount to a misrepresentation of actual German production in the 1780s and 1790s, and that this misrepresentation is ultimately related to local political issues in the wake of the French Revolution (Murnane 2008; Arnold-de Simine 2012). Rather than adhering to any meaningful systematization of cultural transfer that would allow solid differentiation between German and English works, the international nature of these literary relations can be highly confusing. To provide a particularly instructive example: Johann Heinrich Zschokke's bandit-novel *Abällino der große Bandit* (1794) was translated for the British stage by Matthew Lewis as *Rugantino; Or, The Bravo of Venice* (1804). Besides this obvious link, a play going by the title *Abellino; Or, The Bravo's Bride*, claiming to be a dramatic version of Lewis's translation, was produced at the Coburg Theatre in London; Lewis's own adaptation was performed in Covent Garden Theatre in 1805. Meanwhile, a romance going by the title of *The Venetian Outlaw*, which claimed to be an original work only to emerge as an adaptation of a French stage-version of Zschokke's novel, was unfavorably discussed in the *Critical Review* of July 1805 (Guthke 1958: 201–3). As becomes clear in the case of *The Venetian Outlaw*, purportedly German or English works often turn out to be inseparable. As a result, it becomes difficult to distinguish any one single origin of that which has come to be known in the English-speaking world as "the Gothic."

Nevertheless, British critics around 1800 sought to differentiate between English and German tastes. In his satirical poem, "The Shade of Alexander Pope" (1798), T.J. Mathias declares:

No Congress props our Drama's falling state,
The modern ultimatum is, "Translate."
Then sprout the morals of the German school;
The Christian sinks, the Jacobin bears rule.

(Mathias 1799: III, 56–60)

German literature becomes a form of cultural shorthand for anything that is bad about modernity, thereby actually constructing an image of a brutal German literature (Mortensen 2004). Such diagnoses are of interest in terms of establishing an understanding of what German Gothic means in Britain around 1800. For British readers, German novels are obviously dominated by the “shadows of death and the supernatural, phantoms of terrors of the invisible world, and cold-blooded brutalities fill the pages of the *Schauerromantik* with spectres of horror” that Devendra P. Varma diagnosed 150 years later (Varma 1968: viii–ix). Despite Coleridge's rather sheepish conclusion in his review of Maturin's *Bertram* that this supposedly German School of writing – whether in English or German – should actually be recognized as English in heritage (Coleridge 1985: 208–13), this is a stereotype which continues to shape how the English-speaking world has interpreted Germany's *Ritter-, Räuber und Schauerromane*, or novels of chivalry, banditry and horror, to the present day. Coleridge's general argument in chapter 23 of the *Biographia Literaria* showed how, according to German aesthetic debate, the formless madness of contemporary dramatic and novelistic production was derived from Lessing's productive reception of Shakespeare as much as from Young's *Night Thoughts* (Coleridge 1985: 211). The less-than-secret objects of this justification were, of course, Maturin and Byron, however, as Coleridge apologetically reclaimed “blame” for German lawlessness (McGann 1989: 246–49). For Varma, “magic and diablerie were ideas native to the soil of Germany” (Varma 1968: viii–ix), while Robert Miles employed this stereotype as one of the main criteria for ruling out the intertextual relevance of German literature in Ann Radcliffe's works (Miles 1995).

Closer inspection of these critical debates, however, shows that what is troubling about modern reading habits is by no means so clear-cut as a simple critique of German literature. This stereotypical image established itself against the concerted efforts of those men and women involved in importing German culture into Britain toward the close of the eighteenth century. Some of the most important personas in Anglo-German cultural relations in the 1790s are all but forgotten (such as German ex-patriots Peter Will, Constantin Geisweiler and Anton Willich in London whose short-lived journal, *The German Museum*, was intended to introduce British audiences to contemporary German writing). Others, such as William Taylor in Norwich, or Thomas Beddoes and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Bristol, are remembered for the roles they played in the early development of English Romanticism (see the classical accounts in Stockley 1929; Stokoe 1926; Oppel 1971: Vol. II). In the case of the German ex-patriots, it is notable that, with the exception of Geisweiler, they were not primarily literary men: Will, the editor of the journal, was the vicar of the Reformed German congregation in London, and Willich was a physician from Saxony. Despite maintaining correspondence with major German writers, Geisweiler's interests were less idealistic: as the proprietor of a less than successful bookshop that

also sold German works since 1792, his interests were also monetary. Geisweiler did not maintain his own press, but he was responsible for a range of translations – some by his wife Maria – issued by other publishers such as William Lane since the early 1790s; a circulating library, the “Deutsche Lese-Bibliothek,” consolidated these efforts from 1794 onward (Jefcoate 1996; Raven 2004). William Taylor’s reputation, meanwhile, was untainted by such commercial activity. Working from his base in Norwich, Taylor had been an advocate of German writing since spending time there in the early 1780s. Having previously translated works such as Gottfried August Bürger’s *Lenore* (1733) and Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* (1779), Taylor was an important intermediary figure, writing countless reviews on recent German publications and translations and most famously publishing his *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828–30) as one of the core textbooks introducing British readers to German literature in the nineteenth century.

In some respects, British misconceptions of German literature are the fault of the translators and publishers themselves, with novels undergoing significant semantic changes in the course of translation and a corresponding production of stylistically questionable texts. In Peter Teuthold’s translation for the Minerva Press in 1794, for example, the exorcist of Kahlert’s *Der Geisterbanner* becomes the more mysterious “necromancer.” The German source-text focused on the narrator’s reactions to the criminal manipulation within the secret society in the first volume that served to create a psychological framework for the supernatural, drawing first on the individual’s reaction to the various mysterious events caused by Volkert (the anti-hero and supposed necromancer) before rather tediously explaining these mysteries rationally away in the final volume. Teuthold’s eccentric and hyperbolic amendments and additions to Kahlert’s original serve to decenter this specifically Enlightened focus almost entirely. These changes are visible not so much at content-level (the ghosts in the original and in the translation are still the products of a magic-lantern and hence reasonable); rather, amendments on a micro-level radicalize the horror in the text. If, in Kahlert’s text, one reads “*Furchtbar schwebte der Geist meiner Mutter einher; – meine Sinne verließen mich*” (Kahlert 1792: 34), Teuthold writes “The ghost of my mother hovered before my eyes with a grim, ghastly look; a chilly sweat bedewed my face and my senses forsook me” (Kahlert 1989: 15); “*Himmel, wie ward mir*” (Kahlert 1792: 20) becomes “Merciful heaven! How I was chilled with horror” (Kahlert 1989: 16). When a bolt of lightning strikes down Volkert during his final confession, the psychological narrative (incidentally borrowed from a different work, Schiller’s *Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre*; see Menhennet 1980–81) has been completely abandoned by Teuthold in order to revel in a horrific aesthetic of the sublime and the violent: “anticipating the pleasure it would afford me to strike my enemies with terror by my sudden appearance and to feast my eyes on the pangs of the devoted victims of my vengeance” (Kahlert 1989: 138). The English text is littered with such revisions, and it is clear that Teuthold considers this to be in the interests of British taste and expectations (Menhennet 1980–81; Hall 2005: 22–24) rather than the other way around.

Equally important for this image of the horrific German School are the paths of cultural transfer themselves. Looking back on almost ten years of Anglo-German cultural transfer in 1799, the infamous *Anti-Jacobin Review* could declare:

It is with an equal portion of surprize and alarm, that we witness in this country, a glaring depravity of taste, as displayed in the extreme eagerness for foreign productions, and a systematic design to extend such depravity by a regular importation of exotic poison from the envenomed crucibles of the literary and political alchemists of the new German School.

(Boening 1977: I. 342)

German literature is here considered to be a poison destroying the British national character, while the images of “envenomed crucibles” and the lack of difference between “literary and political alchemists” underline that for the *Anti-Jacobin* cultural transfer is inseparable from the turbulent revolutionary events in mainland Europe. This rhetoric is not the invention of the *Anti-Jacobin*, however, because since the translation of Frederick the Great’s correspondence in 1790, the concept of a “cabal” of intelligentsia networking between France and Germany was a potent image, with Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) clearly linking the atheism of Frederick’s philosopher of choice, Voltaire, with the Revolution and German secret societies (Deane 1988: 10–11). How do actual German translations become linked with the revolution, though?

Benedikte Naubert’s *Herrmann von Unna* (1788) helps in this regard. This historical novel was highly popular in the 1790s, almost immediately translated into French (1791), into English in 1794, and was even staged by James Boaden in Covent Garden in 1795 as *The Secret Tribunal*. The novel’s content provides suitable material for conspiracy theories: Ida, illegitimate daughter of a nobleman but raised in a bourgeois family, appears at the court of King Wenceslas and instantly becomes the Empress’s favorite. She falls in love with Herrmann, before becoming tied up in a series of conspiracies which employ secret tribunals to separate her from Herrmann and imprison her falsely in various dungeons and convents. By the time of the novel’s translation in 1794, the images of dungeons, violence and secret tribunals were no longer innocently associated with the Middle Ages, as they were in 1788, but with the real violence of the Jacobin Terror in France. The paths of transfer add to this association: the English text of 1794 seems to have been translated from the French of Baron de Bock (1791), who was a well-known sympathizer with the Girondist faction, a member of the General Assembly in France since 1789, and a Freemason who notoriously published a study on the *Vehmgericht* in Westphalia in order to illustrate the realistic nature of the text he translated. There are numerous amendments in the English text which have their origin in Bock’s historical studies, all of which increase the importance of the secret tribunals in the novel. Whereas the episodes before the *Vehmgericht* were merely one element of the two-volume German work, the English translation adds an entire middle volume which draws on Bock’s study and emphasizes the conspiratorial elements of the plot (Brown 2005; Arnold-de Simine 2012). Given such dubious forms of translation, it is easy to see how the transnational networks of cultural transfer themselves become inseparable from suspicions of conspiracy.

The initial context for this critical paranoia was the publication of the secret papers of Adam Weishaupt’s *Illuminaten-Orden*, or Illuminati, in Germany in 1786/87, a network which, depending on the commentator, could be responsible for anything from poison to magic, from necromancy to the inciting of revolution. The *Illuminaten*

had caused considerable commotion across Europe, and the scandal surrounding Count Cagliostro's fake confession before the Roman inquisition, in which he claimed to be a leading member, fuelled the suspicion that the German secret society were in league with revolutionary forces in France (Müller-Seidel 1983; Rogalla von Bieberstein 1992: 60–63). Owing to the hermetic communication structures of the Order, it was impossible to convince the public of the contrary; furthermore, with Johann Christian Bode publishing a travelogue of his journey to France at the dawn of the Revolution (Bode 1994), and German Jacobins such as Georg Forster in Mainz previously being members of the Order, the *Illuminaten* implicated themselves directly in radical politics (Stephan 1976: 79–82; Schings 1996: 82–83, 154–56).

The most prominent example of conspiratorial denunciations of the cosmopolitan networks behind German literature in Britain is John Robison's infamous *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1797). Robison's real interest lies in his criticism of Weißhaupt's *Illuminaten*, but this extends to a critical discussion of the publication of German writing. With their secret communication networks they are responsible for the worst "blackguard productions of the German presses" (Robison 2004: 247), and if it is not bad enough that they do so in their home country, Robison then claims to "know that the enemy is working among us," implying that the importation of German works amongst "thousands of subscribing Brethren in London alone" is the work of a conspiratorial society (Robison 2004: 246). However tenuous, this link between German secret societies and the Revolution in France gained in popularity throughout the 1790s, and a pattern becomes visible that is relevant for many forms of cultural transfer in this decade: translation is the work of dastardly conspiratorial forces, the source culture is always the shady origin of cross-border conspiracies and hence tied into methods of radical cultural politics leading to revolution.

When Robison, the Anti-Jacobins, or, indeed, other more widely-read literary journals accuse writers, translators, publishers and booksellers of engaging in alchemy, and of being involved in covert threats to British stability, an uncanny doubling is set in place. Insofar as they implicitly transfer thematic elements from individual novels onto a different discursive level, alchemy and secrecy are no longer mere elements in the *discours* of Gothic novels primarily employed to instill fear, sensation or titillation. Instead, they seemingly take on a different status, functioning as a means of modeling and problematizing the productive powers of imagination and their dangers as aesthetic categories in the processes of reading and writing. By deploying the theme of alchemy on a different discursive level, the content of the *Schauerroman* is not the sole issue here; rather, the production, translation and consumption of the *Schauerroman* is modeled as itself being *Gothic*. Alchemy implicitly serves here as a model for literary creativity in the Gothic mode – that is to say, the "envenomed crucibles" of "literary alchemists" mentioned in British criticism of these novels refers to a poetological model according to which German Gothic texts are produced.

Robison and the Anti-Jacobins seem to understand the actions of readers and writers purely in terms of the texts they read: if poisoning is a common theme in Gothic novels, they assume that the author/reader relationship is in fact itself an act of poisoning. This is an old argument, of course: in *Phaidros*, Plato had already declared literature to be a *pharmakon*, that dubious substance that can both cure and kill. The link between literature and alchemy lies in this illusory/simulacral

quality of representation: the alchemy of imagination. In the scientific discourse of the era, alchemy is considered the epitome of an archaic form that relies solely on fancy, imagination and unproven theories rather than on modern methods of inductive investigation and empirical proof. Once again, Cagliostro is an important link, since one of the Italian charlatan's claims to fame was that he was able to transmute base metals into gold and hence create the mystical medicine of potable gold. Like the faked healing power of Cagliostro's alchemical medicines, British critics fear that readers are tricked into accepting the phantasmagoric shadows of the literary world as real, and in the worst case scenario, lose contact with reality altogether. These dangers of the imagination are, of course, precisely the issue that Jane Austen's Henry Tilney raises in relation to Catherine Morland's reading of German Gothic in *Northanger Abbey*. He claims that she has begun to interpret the world as a Gothic novel, thus slipping off into a phantasmagoric delirium induced by the poisonous pills of her Gothic reading.

The role of German Gothic in Anglo-German cultural transfer is thus a complex one. British critics seemingly require it as a literature that knows no national boundaries, if only in order to re-assert indigenous boundaries of national character and taste. Ultimately, the strategies of delimitation relating to politics, violence and imagination with which Germany is associated serve as a screen onto which British critics can project their own misgivings about home-grown literary tastes, tastes which seem to be no less daring in their excitation of the imagination, emotions and bodily affects than the much-maligned offerings from Germany. A definitive answer as to whether Gothic horrors were of English or German taste cannot ultimately be provided. These translations are not only an example of the permeable notions of borders that cultural transfer always reveals; rather, the processes of translation, adaptation and transformation involved in these acts of transfer are *strangely* productive moments in both English and German by virtue of which literary production and translation become Gothicized in their own right.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1768) "Review: *Seltsame Begebenheiten in dem Schlosse Otranto*," in *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 12.1: 363–64.
- Arnold-de Simine, S. (2012) "Blaming the Other: English Translations of Benedikte Naubert's *Herrmann von Unna* (1788/1794)," in A. Cusack and B. Murnane (eds) *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and its International Reception, 1800–2000*, Rochester: Camden House, 60–75.
- Austen, J. (1993) *Northanger Abbey*, 1817, Ware: Wordsworth.
- Barkhoff, J. (2012) " 'The echo of the question, as if it had merely resounded in a tomb': The Dark Anthropology of the *Schauerroman* in Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*," in A. Cusack and B. Murnane (eds) *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and its International Reception, 1800–2000*, Rochester: Camden House, 44–59.
- Boaden, J. (1795) *The Secret Tribunal: A Play in Five Acts*, London.
- Bode, J.J.C. (1994) *Journal von einer Reise von Weimar nach Frankreich: im Jahr 1787*, Munich: Ars una.
- Boening, J. (ed.) (1977) *The Reception of Classical German Literature in England, 1760–1860: A Documentary History from Contemporary Periodicals*, 10 vols, New York, London: Garland.

- Brown, H. (2005), *Benedikte Naubert (1756–1819) and her Relations to English Culture*, Leeds: Maney.
- Carlyle, T. (1827) “The State of German Literature,” in *The Edinburgh Review*, 46: 304–51.
- Coleridge, S. (1985) *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 7: *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Engell and W. Jackson Bate, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Deane, S. (1988) *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Espagne, M. (2006) “Jenseits der Komparatistik: Zur Methode der Erforschung von Kulturtransfers,” in U. Mölk (ed.) *Europäische Kulturzeitschriften als Medien transnationaler und transdisziplinärer Wahrnehmung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 13–32.
- Espagne, M. and Werner, M. (1985): “Deutsch-Französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Francia*, 13: 502–10.
- [Kahlert, K. F.] (1792) *Der Geisterbanner: Eine Wundergeschichte aus mündlichen und schriftlichen traditionen*, Vienna.
- (1989) *The Necromancer, or The Tale of the Black Forest*, 1794, London: Skoob Books.
- Godel, R. (2011) “Anthropologiebasierte Kontingenz: Neue Erklärungsversuche für das Unheimliche am Beispiel von Carl Grosses *Der Genius*,” in B. Murnane and A. Cusack (eds) *Populäre Erscheinungen: Der deutsche Schauerroman um 1800*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink.
- Goethe, J.W. (1888) *Goethes Werke* ed. by Bernhard Suphan, C.A.H. Burkhardt and Eduard von der Hellen. III. *Abtheilung: Goethes Tagebücher. Bd. 2. 1790–1800*. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau.
- Grosse, K. (1796a) *Horrid Mysteries. A Story*, trans. P. Will, London.
- (1796b) *The Genius; Or The Mysterious Adventures of Don Carlos de Grandez*, trans. J. Trapp, London.
- (1982) *Der Genius*, Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins.
- Guthke, K.S. (1958) *Englische Vorromantik und deutscher Sturm und Drang: M.G. Lewis’ stellung in der Geschichte der deutsch-englischen Literaturbeziehungen*, Göttingen: Mayer und Müller.
- Hadley, M. (1977) *Romanverzeichnis: Bibliographie der deutschen Erstausgaben 1751–1800*, Berne: Peter Lang.
- (1978) *The Undiscovered Genre: A Search for the German Gothic Novel*, Berne: Peter Lang.
- Hale, T. (2002) “Translation in Distress: Cultural Misappropriation and the Construction of the Gothic,” in A. Horner (ed.) *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760–1960*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hall, D. (2005) *French and German Gothic Fiction in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Berne: Peter Lang.
- Horner, A. (2002; ed.) *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760–1960*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jefcoate, G. (1996) “‘Hier ist nichts zu machen’: Zum deutschen Buchhandel in London 1790–1806,” in R. Schöwerling et al. (eds) *Literatur und Erfahrungswandel 1789–1830*, Munich: Fink.
- Kahlert, K.F. (1989) *The Necromancer*, 1792, trans. Peter Teuthold, London: Skoob Books.
- (1792) *Der Geisterbanner*, Hohenzollern [Vienna]: Wallishauser.

- Koselleck, R. (1972) “Einleitung” in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* 8 vols, Stuttgart: Klett, 1. xv–xvi.
- Lewis, M. (1805) *Rugantino; Or, The Bravo of Venice, a Grand Romantic Melodrama*, London.
- [Mathias, T.J.] (1799) *Works of the Author of the Pursuits of Literature*, 4 vols, Dublin.
- McGann, J.J. (1989) “The *Biographia Literaria* and the Contentions of English Romanticism” in F. Burwick (ed.) *Coleridge’s Biographia Literaria: Text and Meaning*, Athens, OH: Ohio State University Press, 233–54.
- Menhennet, A. (1980–81): “Schiller and the Germanico-Terrific Romance,” *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 51: 22–57.
- Miles, R. (1995) *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mortensen, P. (2004) *British Romanticism and Continental Influences: Writing in an Age of Europhobia*, Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Müller-Seidel, W. (1983) “Cagliostro und die Vorgeschichte der deutschen Klassik,” in W. Müller-Seidel, *Die Geschichtlichkeit der deutschen Klassik: Literatur und Denkformen um 1800*, Stuttgart: Metzler.
- (2010) “Uncanny Translations, Uncanny Productivity: Walpole, Schiller and Kahlert,” in S. Stockhorst (ed.) *Cultural Transfer through Translation: The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by Means of Translation*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 141–66.
- (2012) “Haunting (Literary) History: An Introduction to German Gothic” in A. Cusack and B. Murnane (eds) *Popular Revenants: German Gothic and its International Reception, 1800–2000*, Rochester: Camden House, 10–43.
- Stephan, I. (1976) *Jakobinismus in Deutschland*, Stuttgart: Metzler.
- [Naubert, B.] (1788) *Herrmann von Unna. Eine Geschichte aus den Zeiten der Vehmgerichte*, Leipzig.
- (1791) *Herman d’Unna, ou Aventures arrivées au commencement du quinzième siècle [Texte imprimé], dans le temps où le tribunal secret avoit sa plus grande influence*, trans. Baron de Bock, Paris.
- (1794) *Herman of Unna: A Series of Adventures of the Fifteenth Century, in which the proceedings of the secret tribunal under the Emperors Wincelauls and Sigismund, are delineated. In three volumes. Written in German by Professor Kramer*, London.
- Oppel, H. (1971) *Englisch-deutsche Literaturbeziehungen*, 2 vols, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.
- Raven, J. (2004) “Cheap and Cheerless: English Novels in German Translations and German Novels in English Translations 1770–99,” in W. Huber (ed.) *The Corvey Library and Anglo-German Cultural Exchanges, 1770–1837*, Munich: Fink, 1–33.
- Robison, J. (2004) *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all Religions and Governments of Europe*, 1797, New York: Forgotten Books.
- Rogalla von Bieberstein, J. (1992) *Die These von der Verschwörung. 1776–1945: Philosophen, Freimaurer, Juden, Liberale und Sozialisten als Verschwörer gegen die sozialordnung*, Flensburg: Flensburger Hefte.
- Schiller, F. (1954) *Schillers Werke: Nationalausgabe ed. Julius Petersen and Hermann Schneider*. Vol. 16, *Erzählungen*, ed. Hans Heinrich Borchardt, Weimar: Böhlau.
- Schings, H-J. (1996) *Die Brüder des Marquis Posa: Schiller und der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*, Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Stockley, V. (1929) *German Literature as Known in England: 1750–1830*, London: Routledge.

- Stokoe, F.W. (1926) *German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788–1818*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Varma, D.P. (1968) “Introduction,” in *The Necromancer trans. by Peter Teuthold from the German of Lorenz Flammenberg*, London: Folio Press, vii–xvii.
- Walpole, H. (1768) *Seltame Begebenheiten in dem Schlosse Otranto, eine gothische Geschichte aus dem englischen M. Horace Walpole übersetzt*, Leipzig.
- (1794) *Die Burg von Otranto: eine Gothische Geschichte*, trans. F. Meyer, Berlin.
- Zschokke, H. (1794) *Abällino der große Bandit*, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig.
- (1805) *The Venetian Outlaw*, trans. R.W. Elliston, London.

FURTHER READING

- Brown, H. (2005), *Benedikte Naubert (1756–1819) and her Relations to English Culture*, Leeds: Maney. (Uses Naubert’s role as important translator to survey complex paths of cultural transfer between Britain and continental Europe.)
- Cusack, A. and Murnane, B. (eds) *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and its International Reception, 1800–2000*, Rochester: Camden House. (First English-language volume dedicated to German Gothic in over 30 years.)
- Hall, D. (2005) *French and German Gothic Fiction in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Berne: Peter Lang. (Adopts a widely thematic and motif-based approach, tracing processes of re-signification as texts cross national borders.)
- Raven, J. (2004) “Cheap and Cheerless: English Novels in German Translations and German Novels in English Translations 1770–99,” in W. Huber (ed.) *The Corvey Library and Anglo-German Cultural Exchanges, 1770–1837*, Munich: Fink, 1–33. (Hallmark essay which focuses on previously unknown German translators and proprietors of German bookstores in London of the late eighteenth century. An important source of historical information regarding the presence of German literature in Britain.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GOTHIC AND THE CHILD READER, 1764–1850



M.O. Grenby

CONTRARY STATES

Attempting to catch the Christmas market, the London publisher John Newbery brought out in late 1764 his *History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, often said to be the first children's novel. In the same city, just before that same Christmas, Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*, the founding text of Gothic literature. It is tempting to make a great deal of this coincidence. These books were two seeds, perhaps, planted in the same soil, from which germinated rival literary forms. Or one could go further. Children's literature and Gothic literature were "two contrary states," to use William Blake's subtitle from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789–94): opposites that were nevertheless necessary to one another, each representing precisely what the other was not. On the one hand there was children's literature, concerned to instruct, nurture and carefully protect children's innocence. On the other is the Gothic, characterized, at least for David Punter, by "paranoia" and "barbarism," obsessed with "taboo" and "the problems of sexuality," and "almost never didactic" (Punter 1980: 404–5, 411). Certainly the sole substantial study of pre-Victorian children's Gothic gives the impression that children's and Gothic literature, though sharing a birthday, could never come together. "Simply put," writes Dale Townshend, "culturally approved forms of children's literature become everything that the Gothic is not" (Townshend 2008: 21). It is a persuasive argument, and there is more than sufficient evidence to support his claim that "British culture officially barred the Gothic from literature for children" (Townshend 2008: 27). Yet the claim is an overstatement, and does not tell quite the whole story. What this essay will consider is whether children's culture and the Gothic were quite so incompatible as has been thought. The principal evidence to consider will be the not insubstantial number of discernibly Gothic texts that were, despite the voluble opposition, published for children in the years before 1850.

First, though, we might ask why children's literature and the Gothic have been understood to be so antithetical. Before the mid-eighteenth century, a recognizably modern children's literature did not exist. Children certainly read, but books designed especially for them were almost exclusively either religious or educational works.

If children wanted (or were allowed) more entertaining material it was to texts designed chiefly for adults that they had to turn. Some of these texts, in both categories, contained elements that might be understood as Gothic *avant la lettre*. Gillian Avery reminds us that Puritan writers in the late seventeenth century often “sought to cause fear and used very considerable eloquence to depict the appalling prospects in store for children who were not savingly converted” (Avery 2000: 88–89). Accordingly, children were supplied with “sensational accounts of martyrdom” and sometimes very gruesome descriptions of the deaths of sinners (Avery 2000: 89). These texts could be astonishingly horrific. See how the “Tormentors” in Hell crack the bones and fry the flesh of sinners, Joseph Alleine warned in *Alarm to the Unconverted* (1672), aimed at a mixed audience of young and old, and see how they delight “to drench them with burning Metal, and to rip open their Bodies, and to pour in the fierce burning Brass into their Bowels, and the recesses and ventricles of their Hearts” (quoted in Avery 2000: 87). Compared with this, “a classic which few young Puritans could have escaped” according to Avery (Avery 2000: 87), the chapbooks, broadsides and romances designed for a general audience, and which children certainly read, must have seemed rather calming, even though they frequently featured accounts of murders, hangings, seductions, combat, hauntings and other phenomena that would later be called “Gothic.”

What changed, from about the 1740s, was that a new, separate literature began to be published for children, a development led by the publisher of *Goody Two-Shoes*, John Newbery. It was at first a precarious enterprise, for a new market had to be established from scratch. But gradually the consumer base expanded, and more publishers saw an opportunity, until, by the end of the eighteenth century, children’s literature had become an established and discrete sector of print culture. Underlying this development was the notion that children should be understood as having different capacities, needs and frailties from adults, a position set out most influentially by the philosopher John Locke in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). An important element of his thought was that the child had a more “tender Mind,” that must, at all costs, be preserved “from all Impressions and Notions of *Spirits* and *Goblins*, or any fearful Apprehensions in the dark” (Locke 1705: 143–44). For this, he went on, is something to which children will be too often subjected, “from the indiscretion of Servants,”

whose usual Method is to awe Children, and keep them in subjection, by telling them of *Raw-Head* and *Bloody Bones*, and such other Names, as carry with them the Idea’s [*sic*] of some thing terrible and hurtful, which they have reason to be afraid of, when alone, especially in the dark.

(Locke 1705: 143–44)

It was a position that was widely adhered to. The narrator in *Goody Two-Shoes*, for example, is openly contemptuous of the supernatural. “People stuff Children’s Heads with Stories of Ghosts, Fairies, Witches and such Nonsense when they are young, and so they continue Fools all their Days” (Anon. 2013: xxx). Whole children’s stories were written to exemplify the point, such as “The History of Francis Fearfull,” in which the stories of his nursemaid Goody Senseless “about Witches and Ghosts, Hobgoblins, and the shrieking woman, the coachman without a head, and

houses that were haunted” make Francis a laughing stock when he arrives at school (Teachum 1774?: 2.57).

Indeed, a century after it had first been published, Locke’s warning was being more emphatically asserted than ever. In 1791 Mary Weightman published *The Friendly Monitor: or Dialogues for Youth Against the Fear of Ghosts, and Other Irrational Apprehensions, with Reflections on the Power of the Imagination, and the Folly of Superstition*: a whole book “professedly designed for the use and benefit of children, in assisting them to banish the tales of the nursery, by pointing out their absurdity, and opening the way to reason and reflection” (quoted in Wroth 2006: 52). Dozens of other children’s authors waged the same enlightened campaign, including Maria Edgeworth, in her influential pedagogical treatise *Practical Education* (1798), and Sarah Trimmer in her pioneering critical journal of children’s literature, *The Guardian of Education* (1802–6). Trimmer, in fact, fought on a different front too. Reviewing a collection of Charles Perrault’s fairy tales, she could express a typically Lockean concern at “the terrific images, which tales of this nature present to the imagination” which are too apt to “injure the tender minds of children, by exciting unreasonable and groundless fears” (Trimmer 1802–6: 2.185–86; see a defense of this position in Tucker 1997). But she was equally likely to use religious arguments. Thus in another of her periodicals, *The Family Magazine* (1788–89), she chides a girl for countenancing supernatural stories with an accusation of sacrilege: “there is but one spirit that we need fear, which is GOD . . . therefore it is very *wicked*, as well as very *foolish*, to be afraid of ghosts” (Trimmer 1788–89: 3.44).

It was in the midst of this concerted campaign that the literary Gothic made its appearance and, on the face of it, the sustained animosity to any transmission to children of “Ghosts, and Other Irrational Apprehensions” gives ample reason for a complete partition of Gothic and children’s literature. Yet one might argue that it was not actually the Gothic *per se* to which the guardians of children’s culture were so opposed. After all, the Gothic was a literary (or at least artistic) tradition and, at least initially, and at least at the top end of the market, it held a high cultural value. The culture of the supernatural of which so many eighteenth-century writers for and about children complained was distinctively oral and plebeian. The culprit might be the “village matron,” as Mark Akenside characterized her in *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744), who “round the blazing hearth, / Suspends the infant-audience with her tales . . . / of witching rhymes, / And evil spirits” and “unquiet souls” (Akenside 1744: 18). Or, following Locke, it might be the household servants – almost always female, as Celestina Wroth has pointed out (Wroth 2006) – who were to blame. Or if not them, then it was their proxies that were objected to: the chap-books, ballads and other forms of popular literature in which supernatural stories, and, by the end of the century, fairy tales too, chiefly appeared. It was, in short, these class and gender associations, more than the content, which underlay the distaste for allowing children to participate in a culture of the supernatural.

The reasons for this are not difficult to isolate. The new children’s literature of the second half of the eighteenth century was designed for the middle class, or for those who aspired to it. Its key characteristics were respectability, rationality and a temperate piety, and it sought to inculcate bourgeois virtues including integrity, reliability and level-headedness. Certainly these values can seem inimical to the Gothic, with its extolment of excess and exaggeration and its challenge to order,

moderation and decency. It was naturally anathema to those who produced the new children's literature. But what was probably more important was that the new children's literature was being deliberately positioned as superseding the old, oral culture in which children had been raised. It claimed to extend the polite influence of the parent or governess into the time spent alone by the child, and thus to eradicate the influence of servants. In short, it was not the "Gothic" qualities of the ghost stories that was most vociferously objected to, but rather their plebeian associations. This being the case, it is less of a surprise to find that, even before 1800, and despite such general disapproval, a Gothic children's literature did in fact exist.

EVADING PROHIBITION: GOTHIC CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Before turning to the incursions of the Gothic into children's books, one point that needs to be made is that, whatever attempts were being made to police the boundaries of children's literature, many young people in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were cheerfully gaining access to the Gothic by other means. The fact is that, until the middle of the nineteenth century, children's literature reached only a small section of the population, and many infants proceeded from their hornbooks, psalters, primers, testaments and so on straight to adult literature (see Grenby 2011: 137–38). Thus the famous child-diarist Marjorie Fleming (b.1803) was merely rather precocious, but not otherwise exceptional, in reading Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) when she was 7. She recorded that she was "much interested in the fate of poor poor Emily" (MacBean n.d.: 33). By 14, readers from all walks of life were enjoying Gothic novels. The apprentice Sheffield cutler Joseph Hunter (b.1783) records borrowing Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (twice) and Mrs Harley's *The Castle of Mowbray* (1788) – "a very silly love tale" – from a subscription library (Hunter 1798); Kit Talbot (b.1803) at Harrow School wrote to his mother that he had got hold of George Brewer's *The Witch of Ravensworth* (1808) and Anna Maria Porter's *Recluse of Norway* (1814) (Martin 2004: 239); and Princess Victoria, three years before her accession to the throne, became obsessed by James Fenimore Cooper's *The Bravo* (1831), transcribing and summarizing great passages of it in her reading journal (Vallone 2001: 136). Such reading was not always regarded as transgressive. One correspondent to Trimmer's *Guardian of Education* actually boasted of her teenage niece having read the anonymous Gothic novel *The Orphan Heiress of Sir Gregory* (1799). The niece was commended for adding pious reflections to extracts that she copied out, such as this classically Gothic passage from the novel:

We descended into the vaults: there the ancient proprietors of the mansion and there the children of the Lady Judith, slept in peace: sweet innocents, I said, your mother joins her departed angels: ere many hours are past, she will sleep by your side; and I secretly wished that I too were an inhabitant of the tomb. The wish was involuntary, but it was nevertheless *impious*; it implies a desire to *desert our duty* . . . [emphasis added by the niece].

(Trimmer 1802–6: 5.148–49)

Aware that she herself was ill (she was to die aged 18), alongside this in her memorandum book the niece wrote about her “impatience to be admitted to those blessed Regions, where all the happy inhabitants are pure and virtuous.” But *The Orphan Heiress*, she went on, “should help to counteract this feeling, or any thing approaching to impatience” (Trimmer 1802–6: 5.148–49).

If the Gothic could be so edifying, we can hardly regard it as entirely antithetical to the purposes of children’s literature. The gulf between the Gothic and the more respectable, rational and religious aspects of young people’s reading was evidently not so large as has been thought. And indeed, looking at the work of those who, as we have seen, professed themselves enemies to presenting children with supernatural stories, we find a surprising willingness to Gothicize. Take Edgeworth, for example. She was adamant that “ideas of apparitions, and windings sheets, and sable shrouds, should be unknown to children” and urged the readers of *Practical Education* to consider how “imprudent” it must be to permit any “early propensity to superstitious terrors” and attendant “temporary suspension of the reasoning faculties” (Edgeworth 1798: 2.611). Yet her children’s stories, generally regarded as constituting the archetype of the rationalist moral tale, contain much that might be considered Gothic. Here, for instance, is a passage from her famous children’s book *The Parent’s Assistant* (1796), describing the thoughts of Lazy Lawrence after he has been persuaded to become a collaborator in a theft:

The black cloud was now passed over the moon, and the light shone full upon them. “What do we stand here for?” said the stable-boy, snatching the flower-pot out of Lawrence’s trembling hands, and pulled him away from the door. “Good God!” cried Lawrence, “you won’t take all – you said you’d only take half a crown, and pay it back on Monday – you said you’d only take half a crown!” – “Hold your tongue,” replied the other walking on, deaf to all remonstrances – “if I am to be hanged ever, it sha’n’t be for half a crown.” Lawrence’s blood ran cold in his veins, and he felt as if all his hair stood on end. Not another word passed. His accomplice carried off the money, and Lawrence crept, with all the horrors of guilt upon him, to his restless bed. All night he was starting from frightful dreams; or else, broad awake, he lay listening to every small noise, unable to stir, and scarcely daring to breathe – tormented by that most dreadful of all kinds of fear, that fear which is the constant companion of an evil conscience.

(Edgeworth 2013: 66–67)

There may be no ghosts here, but there is certainly terror in abundance: a black night saturated in oppressive guilt, impending doom and fear of death, enough to make the reader’s blood, like Lawrence’s, run cold. Others among her stories, particularly those designed for young adults rather than children, were equally terrifying. In one of her most famous, “The Grateful Negro” from *Popular Tales* (1804), Edgeworth introduces not only a planned slave rebellion which will leave “The whites . . . weltering in their blood!” (Edgeworth 2013: 182) but also “Obeah,” an enchantment practiced by a “sorceress” among the slaves, who believed her “to be possessed of supernatural powers” (Edgeworth 2013: 185). To persuade the title-character to join the rebellion, the “sorceress” uses her “magic art” to cast his wife into “the

sleep of death . . . from which no power but mine can restore her to the light of life”. “Yes!” she boasts, “Look at her, pale and motionless! Never will she rise from the earth, unless, within one hour, you obey my commands” (Edgeworth 2013: 191). This was the same Edgeworth who professed herself an enemy of fairy tales, but here was an enchanted sleep far more terrifying than Sleeping Beauty’s and the prospect of a massacre more bloody than Bluebeard’s. Clearly Edgeworth was not averse to introducing young readers to the Gothic when it suited her.

The thrill that Gothic elements could lend a children’s story were evidently difficult for authors to resist. Even when children’s stories were written, as they often were, with the deliberate intention of undermining childish fears of the dark and the supernatural, it is striking how thoroughly Gothic the narratives could actually be. In one of the inset stories in her *Elements of Morality, for the Use of Children* (1790), for instance, Mary Wollstonecraft presented her readers with a child stranded at night in a strange wood and frightened by “a little black man sitting waving his head backwards and forwards . . . a great white thing [that] came out of a bush . . . a death’s head [that] peeped through on an oak, and not far from it, something with horns and a long tail” (Wollstonecraft 1790: 1.18). In fact, Wollstonecraft immediately points out, the child “only saw bushes, broken branches, and a white horse,” and her aim is to teach her readers not to let fear render their minds so weak that they cannot calmly consider how foolish such conjectures must be (Wollstonecraft 1790: 1.18). Yet we cannot help but wonder which her readers would be more likely to remember, the lesson or the description of the boy’s terror. Already terrified, he “saw a tall black figure approach him, with a white cap on its head, and a milk white pigeon flew before it” (Wollstonecraft 1790: 1.18–19). This, we learn later, is a friendly clergyman come to rescue him from the night, and to chide him for his superstition. But Wollstonecraft draws the boy’s dread with language straight out of a Minerva Press novel:

He started up, but was so weak his legs sunk under him, and he fell again on the ground; however, as he plainly saw it advance nearer and nearer, fear gave him strength and screaming out he sprang forward. – The thing followed him, crying stop, stop; but he ran heedlessly on, and running against the root of a tree he fell and was caught. The terror which seized him is not to be described, he neither heard nor saw any thing, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth when he attempted to utter a few inarticulate words.

(Wollstonecraft 1790: 1.18–19)

Should we regard this as hypocrisy, then, on the part of Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft? Were they offering an orthodox deprecation of the Gothic while simultaneously using its vocabulary, imagery and tone to engage their young readers? That would be harsh. Looking carefully at Edgeworth’s position we see, again, that it is not the Gothic itself as being unsuitable for the young to which she objects, but rather its plebeian associations and its unsupervised consumption. In *Practical Education*, it is the “eloquent village matron” “telling dreadful stories to her infant audience” for whom she reserves her hostility, not the stories themselves (Edgeworth 1798: 2.612). And even the genuinely horrific fairy story of Bluebeard she regards with

equanimity, so long as it is properly glossed – as she records a man of her acquaintance doing by interrupting a rendition of the tale at the moment of highest suspense to mock both Bluebeard and his wife so that “instead of freezing their young blood” the tale “produced general laughter” (Edgeworth 1798: 2.613).

THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: STILL “SQUEAMISH DAYS”?

It is tempting to think that the era of Romanticism, with its prioritization of imagination and emotion over reason and instruction, would have provided a more congenial environment for the integration of the Gothic into children’s literature. Certainly, standard histories of children’s literature are wont to speak of a steady decline in the emphasis on realism, rationality and didacticism in the first half of the nineteenth century, and, symptomatically, of a growing approval for fairy tales. The fairy tale tradition had never been completely eradicated from children’s literature, the stories having been carefully appropriated for didactic purposes (see Grenby 2006). But increasingly the more supernatural elements of the tradition were being left intact and unglossed. A culmination came with the publication of the Brothers Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812), translated into English as *German Popular Stories* by Edgar Taylor from 1823. The supernatural also formed a recurrent theme in the work of many of the major Romantic writers, including Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, the Shelleys, Keats and Scott, where it was often associated with childhood but not necessarily with lasting ill effects. In his essay on “Witches, and Other Night Fears” (1821), for instance, Charles Lamb talked of the traumatizing effects of his childhood reading, but stated explicitly that “It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create these terrors in children” (Lamb and Lamb 1903: 2.68). And as if directly to rebut Locke and his disciples, he cited the example of a child he knew who had “been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition – who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition” (Lamb and Lamb 1903: 2.68), but who then simply made up his own specters to leave his nights no less disturbed than Lamb’s (Lamb and Lamb 1903: 2.68). Indeed, as Townshend notes, when Romantic writers considered childhood reading they tended to conclude that “the effects of ghostly tales are more positive than negative” (Townshend 2008: 30).

This is not to say that doubts about the propriety of including terrific imagery and themes in children’s literature had wholly vanished. When the *German Popular Stories* was published, some of the Grimms’ more horrific images were excised: “we have not entered into the particulars of the queen’s death,” wrote Taylor in the notes accompanying “Snow-drop” (a version of “Snow-White”), “which in the German is occasioned by . . . being obliged to dance in red-hot slippers or shoes” (Grimm and Grimm 1823: 231; 1884–92). The more Gothic of the Grimms’ tales were simply not translated for English children. Similarly William Godwin, radical philosopher and himself an occasional Gothic novelist, expressed doubts about the inclusion of horrific imagery in the children’s books he had begun to publish. Having commissioned his friend Charles Lamb to write *The Adventures of Ulysses* for his “Juvenile Library,” and having received the manuscript, he complained in a letter of 1808 that

“We live in squeamish days.” “And,” he continues,

what will the squeamish say to such expressions as these? “devoured their limbs, yet warm & trembling, lapping the blood.” p. 10, or to the giant’s vomit, p. 14, or to the minute & shocking description of the extinguishing the giant’s eye, in the page following. You I dare say have no formed plan of excluding the female sex from among your readers, & I, as a bookseller, must consider that, if you have, you exclude one half of the human species.

(Lamb and Lamb 1975–78: 2.278)

In fact, Lamb got his way, and the published volume retained its gruesome depictions of Ulysses’s combat with the Cyclops. This contributes to an impression that, in the nineteenth century, the influence of Locke was at last beginning to wane. A famous section of the Evangelical Mary Martha Sherwood’s highly successful children’s novel *The Fairchild Family* (1818) supports this idea. Sherwood describes a father showing his two children a gibbeted corpse, “not yet fallen to pieces”; she evidently meant to disturb, carefully setting out macabre details: “The body had on a blue coat, a silk handkerchief round the neck . . . and every other part of the dress still entire: but the face of the corpse was so shocking, that the children could not look at it” (Sherwood 1818: 57). The justification for the horror is clear. As carefully explained by the father, the rotting corpse forms a warning against childhood quarrels, for the man in the gibbet had murdered his brother. But what is striking is how unapologetic Sherwood is for what we might call this “Evangelical Gothic.” Sherwood’s convictions about the importance of her moral and religious lessons have, it seems, finally overcome Locke’s warnings about the injurious psychological effects of this kind of imagery.

If authors were thus becoming less reluctant openly to include “horror” in their writing for children, were other elements of the Gothic, the supernatural and the terrifying, also becoming less obnoxious? Probably yes. Two novels published by John Harris, successor to John Newbery, were wholesale adaptations of the Gothic novel for children: the anonymous *Castle on the Rock: Or, The Successful Stratagem* (1808) and *Glenowen: Or, The Fairy Palace* (1815) by Eleanor Sleath, author of one of the seven “horrid novels” named in *Northanger Abbey*. The former develops an unlikely plot, for a children’s book, revolving around the incarceration of two women who refuse to consent to be the mistress of a wicked count. The latter quickly introduces a ghost, bestowing mysterious gifts on two young orphans in a picturesque Welsh village and later inviting them to an eerie mansion. The ghost is ultimately revealed to be a charitable lady, once betrothed to the children’s father, who has encouraged their belief that she is a phantom so that she may aid them anonymously.

Even more blatant in its attempt to rework standard Gothic tropes for young readers is *Stories of Old Daniel: Or, Tales of Wonder and Delight* (1808) written for Godwin’s “Juvenile Library” by Margaret King Moore, Lady Mount Cashell, herself formerly a pupil of Wollstonecraft and later a friend to Mary Shelley. “Father Giacomo,” one of Daniel’s autobiographical narratives, is set in Italy and, with its descriptions of sublime scenery, a surly postilion who tells “horrid anecdotes” (Moore 2011: 106), and a mysterious monk with a distinct and

strange appearance whom the locals regard with awe, this short tale is a compendium of eighteenth-century Gothic convention, seemingly the product of a systematic ransacking of Ann Radcliffe's oeuvre. Their road entering a dark wood, Daniel and his companion are set upon by a band of "banditti," "dragged out of the carriage" (Moore 2011: 104), led past "a cross placed on one side of the path, which marked the place where a murder had been committed" (Moore 2011: 105), taken to the lair of a malevolent "hermit" where a "single lamp, burning before a picture of the Virgin, threw sufficient light on the surrounding objects to show us all the horror of our situation" (Moore 2011: 107). Just as they are about to be murdered by four "savage looking creatures . . . armed with those sharp daggers called in Italy *stiletto*s" (Moore 2011: 106) the mysterious monk suddenly reappears to rescue Daniel and his companion. Though a brigand himself, the monk saves them because Daniel, despite having recognized him as an outlaw, had not betrayed him to the authorities. "Let this be a warning to you always to act honourably" is the moral rather improbably drawn by the monk (Moore 2011: 107). Evidently, even if it could be ham-fisted, the Gothic *could* be didactic.

By the 1840s the idea that children might happily consume Gothic stories had become much less contentious. Charles Dickens was cheerfully introducing moralizing ghosts into *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 and *The Chimes: A Goblin Story* a year later. An immensely successful English translation of Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* appeared in 1848, its cautionary tales, ending in children's gruesome deaths or dreadful mutilations, veering between morality, comedy and horror. Even more curious was Jefferys Taylor's *The Young Islanders, A Tale of the Last Century* (1841). Beginning with a well-worn Gothic convention – the story has purportedly been retrieved from a decaying manuscript – the novel is a robinsonade which, anticipating William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), inverts the usual optimistic accounts of children's survival on desert islands by depicting the fatal accidents, homicides and suicides of a group of shipwrecked schoolchildren. It is "a Gothic tale of horrific proportions," writes Jackie Horne (Horne 2011: 110). But what is perhaps most surprising is that this is horror *without* instruction. "Our expectation in reading children's literature of the early nineteenth century is that it will contain, by definition, a didactic message," observes Horne. But in Taylor's book, the "horror is not about teaching children to become more religious, and not about teaching them to empathize" and there appears to be absolutely no "message" (Horne 2011: 120).

The wheel, it seems, has come full circle: from a children's literature of the eighteenth century that was didactic to the exclusion of the Gothic, to a book from the mid-nineteenth century that was Gothic to the exclusion of the didactic. It is a shift that conforms to old histories of children's literature that charted a transition from books that were primarily instructive to books that aimed chiefly to delight, and like all such metahistories, a straightforward account of a steadily growing acceptance of the Gothic in children's culture should be regarded with skepticism. The few isolated titles discussed here – *Glenowen*, *Stories of Old Daniel*, *The Young Islanders* and others – do not necessarily represent the overall picture, and there were surely many authors, commentators and consumers who would still have been very uneasy, in the Victorian age, about the damaging effects of Gothic reading on young people. But equally, those who inveighed against the Gothicization of children's culture

should not be allowed to persuade us that young people did not gain access to Gothic pleasures in the early nineteenth and even late eighteenth centuries. It is clear, in fact, that from the very origins of children's literature, young people were consuming the Gothic, whether in novels designed for adults, popular literature, overtly gothicized children's books, or even works by authors who professed themselves opposed to any integration of the two forms. In the eighteenth century, and into the nineteenth too, many remained squeamish about allowing children to come into contact with the Gothic, but no imposed border, no matter how strenuously patrolled, could prevent the mixing of two of the most vigorous and appealing cultural forms of the age.

REFERENCES

- Akenside, M. (1744) *The Pleasures of Imagination: A Poem in Three Books*, London.
- Anon. (2013) *Little Goody Two-Shoes and Other Stories Originally Published by John Newbery, 1764*, ed. M.O. Grenby, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Avery, G. (2000) "Intimations of Mortality: The Puritan and Evangelical Message to Children," in G. Avery and K. Reynolds (eds) *Representations of Childhood Death*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 87–110.
- Edgeworth, M. (1798) *Practical Education*, 2 vols, London.
- (2013) *Selected Tales for Children and Young People*, ed. S. Manly, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Grenby, M. (2006) "Tame Fairies Make Good Teachers: The Popularity of Early British Fairy Tales," *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 30: 1–24.
- (2011) *The Child Reader 1700–1840*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grimm, J. and Grimm, W. (1823) *German Popular Stories, Collected by M. M. Grimm from Oral Tradition*, ed. and trans. Edgar Taylor, London.
- (1884–92) *Household Tales*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. Margaret Hunt, London.
- Horne, J. (2011) *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- Hunter, J. (1798) "Journal," British Library, Add. MSS. 24,879, f.17.
- Lamb, C. and Lamb, M. (1903) *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 6 vols, ed. E.V. Lucas. London: Methuen.
- (1975–78) *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, 3 vols, ed. E.W. Marrs Jr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Locke, J. (1705) *Some Thoughts Concerning Education. The Fifth Edition, Enlarged*, 1693, London.
- MacBean, L. (n.d.) *Marjorie Fleming's Book: The Story of Pet Marjorie, together with her Journals and her Letters*, New York: Boni and Liveright.
- Moore, M. K. (2011) "Stories of Old Daniel," 1808, in A. Markey (ed.) *Children's Fiction 1765–1808*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 75–141.
- Martin, J. (2004) *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House*. London: Hambledon and London.
- Punter, D. (1980) *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, London: Longman.
- Sherwood, M. (1818) *The History of the Fairchild Family: Or, The Child's Manual*, London: J. Hatchard.
- Teachum, T. (1774?) "The History of Francis Fearfull," in *The Lilliputian Magazine; or, Children's Repository*, 6 vols, London, 2.55–67.

- Townshend, D. (2008) “The Haunted Nursery, 1764–1830,” in A. Jackson, K. Coats and R. McGillis (eds) *The Gothic in Children’s Literature: Haunting the Borders*, New York: Routledge, 15–38.
- Trimmer, S. (1788–89) *The Family Magazine: Or, a Repository of Religious Instruction, and Rational Amusement*, 18 vols, London: Marshall and Co.
- (1802–6) *The Guardian of Education*, 5 vols, London.
- Tucker, N. (1997) “Fairy Tales and their Early Opponents: In Defence of Mrs Trimmer,” in M. Hilton, M. Styles and V. Watson (eds) *Opening the Nursery Door: Reading, Writing and Childhood 1600–1900*, London: Routledge, 104–16.
- Vallone, L. (2001) *Becoming Victoria*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wollstonecraft, M. (1790) *Elements of Morality, for the Use of Children; With An Introductory Address to Parents. Translated from the German of the Rev. C. G. Salzmann*, 2 vols, London.
- Wroth, C. (2006) “‘To Root the Old Woman out of Our Minds’: Women Educationists and Plebian Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 30: 48–78.

FURTHER READING

- Alderson, B. (1993) “The Spoken and the Read: *German Popular Stories* and English Popular Diction,” in D. Haase (ed.) *The Reception of Grimms’ Fairy Tales: Responses, Reactions, Revisions*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 59–77. (Discusses the linguistic and thematic mutations that took place when the Grimms’ fairy tales were translated into English by Edgar Taylor in 1822–26.)
- Colclough, S. (2000) “Procuring Books and Consuming Texts: The Reading Experience of a Sheffield Apprentice, 1798,” *Book History*, 3: 21–44. (Account of the reading of Joseph Hunter, apprentice cutler in his late teens, who was an enthusiastic borrower from circulating libraries.)
- Georgieva, M. (2011) “The Gothic Child: A Study of the Gothic Novel in the British Isles (1764–1824),” unpublished thesis, Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis. (Study of children as characters in Gothic fiction.)
- Howarth, M. (2007) “Under the Bed Creeping: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Gothicism in Children’s Literature,” unpublished thesis, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. (Looks at the function of Gothic in children’s literature and particularly its relationship to theories of psychosocial development.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

GOTHIC AND THE CHILD READER, 1850–PRESENT



Chloe Buckley

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

In current mass market children's fiction, Gothic dominates and reviewers lavish praise on anything deemed "deliciously scary" (Merritt 2010), "deliciously spine-tingling" (Seymenliyska 2011), "chilling, creepy and utterly compelling" (Lewis 2012), "marvellously strange and scary" (Pullman 2002: 33) or "wonderfully macabre" (Riddell 2009). Traditional fantasy and Golden Age "back-list" favorites have been swept aside in this Gothic craze, which constitutes a huge variety of styles, genres and audiences: pitch-perfect Gothic pastiche in Chris Priestley's *The Tales of Terror* (2007–9) and Anne Fine's *The Devil Walks* (2011); splatter horror in Darren Shan's *Demonata* series (2005–9); psychological Gothic in Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011) and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002); dark fantasy with Joseph Delaney's *The Spook's Apprentice* (2004); adventures on the high seas with Justin Somper's *Vampirates* (2005–11); wisecracks with Derek Landy's Noir detective *Skulduggery Pleasant* (2007–12); dystopian horror in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008) and, of course, sparkly vampires in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005).

Comparing these titles to those that Edward Salmon lists as children's favorites in 1888 – Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), Johann David Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho* (1855) and *The Bible* – it seems that children's reading has changed beyond recognition in the past 150 years (Salmon: 1888: 15, 23). Indeed, the current explosion in Gothic fiction is unprecedented in the history of children's literature. Forget the Golden Age: this is the Gothic Age.

Praise for children's Gothic is characterized by a metaphor of consumption. Reviewers describe Gothic as "satisfying" and "delicious." As the *Stirling Observer* exclaims: "There is nothing most kids like more in their literary diet than a good helping of gruesome" (White 2010). But who is in charge of the child's diet? Writers, publishers, librarians, teachers or parents? Despite imagining a "child reader" who devours Gothic fiction with glee, it is principally the adult who serves up the gory thrills and terror. Eat up, children. It is good for you:

Art for children should be scary. It needs to be scary . . . The young generation will, thirty years on, remember what it felt like to be scared of one of the soul-sucking dementors from the *Harry Potter* stories. I can still remember what it was like to be scared almost to death by Nicholas Fisk's heart-stoppingly horrible book *Grinny* . . . And what about the long red legg'd scissor-man from Struwwelpeter? Thumb amputation – that's the stuff to throw at kids.

(Leith 2009)

Reviewers and critics write on behalf of a child, reveling in the prospect of the child's delight in terror. But the child they imagine is as much a fiction as the books they prescribe. Karin Lesnik-Oberstein puts forward a strong argument against the fallacy of the "real child" which endures in most writing about children's fiction. The "child," she tells us, is not a self-evident reality, but a fiction produced by the book and the critic: "a narrative, a discourse, fulfilling distinct ideological and psychological functions" (Lesnik-Oberstein 2000: 227). Thus, the child invoked by critics in praise of the Gothic is conjured out of the past, either an imagined literary past, or a personal, psychological past:

This story comes more from memories of playing hide and seek as a child, of being confined in a cupboard or a wardrobe or whatever, and hearing your own breath and the muffled footsteps beyond; the mixture of excitement and fear tied up in the anticipation of being caught.

(Priestley 2012a)

This ghostly child reader is not an uncanny manifestation. Rather it is comforting and nostalgic. Gothic children's writer Chris Priestley, quoted above, tells us that he writes for the boy he once was, constructing a child reader for his Gothic tales out of nostalgia for lost childhood pleasures (Priestley 2012b). However, nostalgia for the perceived terrors of childhood is not a twenty-first-century phenomenon; it is as old as children's literature itself. In 1821 Charles Lamb declared he was "ashamed to say how prosaic my dreams are grown" (Lamb 1821: 387), and lamented the loss of the night terrors that plagued his childhood. It is unsurprising, then, that much twenty-first-century Gothic for children either locates itself in the past, or else deliberately evokes the styles and aesthetics of the past. Strikingly, the past location most commonly evoked is a distinctly nineteenth-century one.

Before examining how present Gothic fictions recall and make use of the past, it is important to understand the relationship between Gothic and children's fiction during the nineteenth century itself. Though Gothic traces can be located in various strands of children's fiction during the nineteenth century, no discrete Gothic fiction for children really exists. Cheap weekly serial fiction, the "penny blood" and "Penny Dreadful," often contained plagiarized versions of Gothic tales and offered plenty of violence and thrills. Initially read by adults and children alike, the Penny Dreadful by the mid-nineteenth century came to be regarded as "children's stuff" (Haining 1975: 302). Publications such as Edwin Brett's *The Boys of England* (1866–99) and Charles Fox's *The Boys' Standard* (1875–92) continued to make use of Gothic themes and sensation up to the end of the nineteenth century, and were likely read by both middle- and working-class children. This popular form of the Gothic might

have provided illicit reading material to supplement that of the nursery bookshelf as Penny Dreadful magazines often thrived where more “wholesome” publications failed (Lang 1980: 23–24). However, by the late-Victorian period, even publishers like Brett sought respectability, and new characters like “Jack Harkaway” saw Gothic themes gradually forgotten in favor of Empire heroes and dashing deeds (Turner 1948: 79).

The increasing “professionalization” of childhood throughout this period precipitated numerous attacks on horror fiction and melodrama aimed at or available to children, blaming it for many of the social ills of the day (Greenwood 1874; Dunae 1979; Springhall 1994). Consequently, “Golden Age” fiction is comprised largely of works of fantasy and literary fairy tales that are relatively remote from what we now call the Gothic. Though fairy tales, in particular, have been increasingly reclaimed as Gothic in present times, or retroactively gothicized in psychoanalytical readings and rewritings, those written in the Victorian period specifically for children retain a strong sentimental or moralizing tone and sanitize any shocking, sexual or violent content to suit middle-class sensibilities (Zipes 1983: 18).

As the twentieth century approaches, then, where does Gothic go? If we try to trace the Gothic using a diachronic narrative, we soon run into problems. As M.O. Grenby points out, “by the middle of the nineteenth century, children’s literature had become too diverse to be easily organised into one, or even several, lines of descent . . . it ranged across markets and genres” (Grenby 2009: 54). This is equally true for Gothic, which might be found in any number of guises and unlikely places throughout the twentieth century. Linear narratives are popular in children’s literature criticism, but inevitably fail to be comprehensive. Moreover, such narratives need to construct a child reader who is self-evident, static and homogenous, regardless of century, culture or class. However, as we have seen, this “child reader” is a fabrication, a counterfeit. Instead of constructing a counterfeit child in a counterfeit history, then, we need to interrogate the narrative we tell about children’s literature. The current Gothic Age founds itself *somewhere* in the nineteenth century, and, in re-reading this period as Gothic, constructs a new story of children’s literature’s origins and purpose.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF ALICE

The fact that Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is often cited as the first truly modern children’s book is more evidence of the preference within critical accounts of children’s literature for a neat and linear narrative. But the *Alice* books also hold great significance for a Gothic reinterpretation of that narrative. The release of Tim Burton and Disney’s *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) is the culmination of a late-twentieth-century trend to gothicize Carroll’s Golden Age fantasy. Critics exclaim that the Gothic director and Victorian fabulist were “made for each other,” engaging in a discourse that embraces *Alice* as Gothic all along (Errigo 2010). In the film itself, Alice’s discovery that “Wonderland” is actually “Underland” reclaims it as a psychic-Gothic space, *uncovering* the text’s Gothic heart. Relocating *Alice* to a Gothic setting, Burton’s film follows the likes of Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline* (2002). Gaiman fuses Carroll’s *Looking Glass* premise with Freud’s essay on “The Uncanny,” with an added nod to a disturbing Victorian moral tale by Lucy Lane Clifford entitled “The New Mother.” In this 1882 tale, the naughty behavior of two

girls prompts their mother to leave home, leaving behind a monstrous replacement with glass eyes and a wooden tail. In Gaiman's modern version, Coraline ventures into an apartment that is the mirror image of her own home, and must battle with an uncanny "Other Mother" who wishes both to trap her there and to obliterate Coraline's identity by replacing her eyes with buttons. Gaiman's psychic Gothic both originates from and feeds back into a late-twentieth-century trend of re-reading Golden Age fiction as both Freudian uncanny and Gothic, *Alice* being the most prominent.

Both Angela Carter's "Alice in Prague or The Curious Room" (1993) and the surreal stop-motion film *Alice* by Jan Svankmajer (1988) invoke uncanny imagery of dolls, exploit Gothic settings and suggest psychological disintegration and disorientation. In popular culture, the trend to read *Alice* as Gothic is most prominent in the 2000 computer game *American McGee's Alice*, which employs a plethora of Gothic images. The game's trailer suggests an uncanny reading as a sinister music box melody plays over a chaotic scene of dilapidated children's toys, strongly recalling Svankmajer's film. The voiceover hauntingly resonates: "Something's broken . . . I am . . . beyond a shattered looking glass, fairytale becomes nightmare," and the word "DEAD" is spelled out in wooden blocks. Increasingly, *Alice* has come to stand for madness, nightmare and fractured identity. Indeed, since Goldschmidt's 1933 essay, "Alice in Wonderland Psycho-Analysed," even the relationship between Dodgson and his muse has been gothicized, with critics exploring the unhealthy connection between adult writer and child reader. Of course, neither *American McGee's Alice* (rated 15) nor the work of Carter and Svankmajer is intended for children. However, these texts pave the way for a Gothic *Alice* for children in the twenty-first century. But whether it is Alice, Dodgson or the text itself, these uncanny Gothic readings constitute a backward projection, retroactively gothicizing, rather than uncovering or revealing what was there all along. It is significant that the Gothic Age of children's literature occurs just as Gothic *Alice* moves from adult culture into children's culture.

Whether Tim Burton's *Alice* is a Gothic text or not is almost beside the point. It presents itself as such and readily employs a Gothic aesthetic in its representation of the "Victorian" past. The opening panning shot across a smoky, Victorian cityscape represents the London of Burton's own *Sweeney Todd* (2007), Oliver Parker's *Dorian Gray* (2009) and Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009). Burton's use of a Gothic neo-Victorian setting is typical of wider trends in children's literature, where a reconstructed "Victorian" past is used both as the setting for the fiction and its site of origin. Identifying a neo-Victorian location for children's Gothic follows Catherine Spooner's argument that the Victorian period should be read as a new "Gothic cusp," as it features prominently in late-twentieth-century Gothic as the point at which the present struggles to break from the past. Here the "Victorian" functions as "the repressed material of modernity" (Spooner 2007: 44). In the same way, *Alice* is newly revealed as uncanny and disturbing in a twenty-first-century Gothic narrative of children's fiction.

However, the return to the nineteenth century in children's fiction is more than a mirror of what is occurring in adult Gothic. Though some texts designate a neo-Victorian setting, such as Phillip Pullman's *Sally Lockhart* books (1985–94), many are less precise in their invocation of the past than adult historiographic metafiction

(Hutcheon 1998). Settings range from the vaguely eighteenth century to the Edwardian, with a reluctance to pin down dates and specifics. Quite frequently, texts are located in a timeless world: F.E. Higgins's *Tales from the Sinister City* (2007–11), for example, is located in a hyper-Gothic secondary world, with elements of early industrial society, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fashions, as well as steam-punk aesthetics and technology. Likewise, Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999–2007) has an ostensibly contemporary setting with cars, telephones and computers, but actually constructs its own peculiarly Gothic period from the aesthetics of past decades and centuries.

The plundering of the past carried out by contemporary children's Gothic fiction is perhaps most prominent in the work of Chris Priestley. In *The Dead of Winter* (2011), Priestley constructs a deliberately undefined Victorian/Edwardian/Gothic setting, and his child protagonist is patently modeled both on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Mary Lennox*. Priestley's popular *Tales of Terror* series is likewise set in "a Victorian or Edwardian past imagined by writers of ghost stories" (Priestley 2012c). The first editions of *Tales of Terror* sport Edward Gorey-inspired artwork, courtesy of children's illustrator David Roberts. The reference to Gorey reveals the counterfeit nature of the text's Victorian aesthetic. Gorey's artwork is invoked to signify a Victorian or Edwardian setting, yet he is a twentieth-century artist creating a counterfeit of costumes and settings ranging from the mid-Victorian period to the 1930s.

Priestley's deliberate muddling of historical settings, intertextual references and aesthetics of Gothic fictions of the past creates the effect of what Fredric Jameson calls "past-ness." For Jameson, nostalgia approaches the "past" through stylistic connotation, conveying "past-ness" through images. Thus "past-ness" creates only "pseudo-historical depth" (Jameson 1998: 21). However, Jameson's dismissal of nostalgia and pastiche as empty necessarily posits a "real history" of which postmodern art has lost sight. Yet, *Tales of Terror* and many other contemporary Gothic texts for children have no interest in "real history." Instead, they posit that our relationship with the past is necessarily one forged by images, with texts and with stories. Priestley's metafictional *Mister Creecher* (2011) tells the story of Frankenstein's monster as he follows his creator through early industrial London. The monster encounters Mary Shelley and a number of characters created by Charles Dickens. In this way, the "nineteenth century" that is reconstructed by contemporary children's Gothic is emphatically textual. Nonetheless, it is simultaneously aware of its own counterfeit nature; contemporary children's Gothic also looks back to the past for authenticity.

WHY DO WE NEED TO "BRING BACK THUMB AMPUTATION"?

Contemporary Gothic children's fiction looks to the past for authenticity by locating its own origins there. One of the most common claims by writers and critics is that contemporary children's Gothic reinstates a lost form of fiction, one that is more authentic and more appropriate for children than the forms of fiction that erroneously came to replace it.

Gaiman began writing Gothic for children a decade ago, after having already established his own distinct brand of adult Gothic. Gaiman claims that the children's

fiction market was not ready for the Gothic before the new millennium, saying that when he wrote *Coraline* in 1990, publishers were wholly disinterested: “Unless you’re going to write a realistic novel about a kid in a tower block whose brother has heroin problems, no one will publish it” (Gaiman in Ouzounian 2009). Gaiman is perhaps implicitly referring here to the celebrated children’s novel of 1996, *Junk*, by Melvin Burgess, whose realistic treatment of runaways and drug abuse earned it both the Carnegie Medal and Guardian Children’s Fiction award in 1997. It is indicative of how quickly fashions change in the children’s publishing world, though, that Burgess followed *Junk* with a startlingly different novel, *Bloodtide* (1999), which dealt with more violent themes. *Bloodtide* constituted Burgess’s own turn away from realism to fictions of the past, rewriting, as it does, Icelandic saga and Norse myth in a dystopian setting. Of course, in the very same year that *Junk* received so much critical acclaim, *Harry Potter* was also released, arguably the most prominent book in launching renewed interest in fantasy and Gothic fiction for children.

What is most interesting about Gaiman’s complaint, though, is that it echoes that of nineteenth-century writer, Heinrich Hoffmann. In 1848, the self styled “*kinderlieb*” or lover of children published the infamous *Struwwelpeter: Merry Stories and Funny Pictures* in English. In this gruesome volume, a variety of naughty children are punished for their various misdeeds, including poor Conrad “Suck-a-Thumb” whose offending digit is snipped off with the Tailor’s scissors. *Struwwelpeter* is now widely regarded as a brutal piece of moral didacticism, despite Hoffmann’s claims that the stories were intended as humorous entertainment. Hoffmann set out to write the book after deciding that the books of the time were not sufficiently engaging for his children, and resolving to write his own instead. Likewise, Gaiman claims that his daughter Holly loved scary stories: “Well, I couldn’t find any stories like this for her on the shelves, so I thought I’d write one for her” (in Ouzounian 2009). Both Gaiman and Sam Leith, whose previously quoted *Guardian* article suggests we bring back “thumb amputation,” follow Hoffmann in invoking fictions of the past to provide something lacking in the present, something the child wants and needs. But as Jack Zipes points out, Hoffmann’s book “was never really conceived or created for children . . . *Struwwelpeter* had to appeal to the tastes and values of adults” (Zipes 2002: 153). In the same way, Gaiman’s and Leith’s call to bring back the Gothic of the past tells us more about adult desires than about those of the child.

Moreover, claims that children’s literature suffered a lamentable absence of Gothic fiction before the twenty-first century are somewhat disingenuous. It is possible to trace Gothic in the writing of popular and literary children’s fiction from the Victorian period to the present day. Writers such as Frances Hodgson Burnett, Philippa Pearce, John Masefield, Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, Roald Dahl, Gillian Cross, Robert Swindells and Christopher Pike are some of the names from the past century who have either invoked Gothic tropes, explored the potential of dark fantasy and uncanny time-slip narratives, published ghost stories or developed gruesome horror for children and adolescents. During the 1990s, for example, Scholastic’s labels *Point Horror* and *Goosebumps* dominated the market in both the UK and the US.

Nonetheless, Gaiman’s claims invoke a popular critical narrative about Gothic for children. This narrative tells us that Golden Age literature pushed Gothic so far underground that it went into hibernation for over a century, until it was revived by

writers like Gaiman and restored to its rightful place as the dominant mode in which to write for children. Anna Jackson, Karen Coats and Roderick McGillis favor this teleological narrative in their 2008 collection, *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders*. Their claim that “the Gothic was soundly suppressed” in children’s literature from the eighteenth century onward echoes an oft-repeated nostalgic lament, popular with both Romantic and Victorian critics (2008: 2). Grenby points out that the death of the gruesome chapbook one used to enjoy as a youth was decried by writers from the late eighteenth century through to the late-Victorian period, despite the fact that the tradition obviously continued to flourish (Grenby 2007).

For Jackson, Coats and McGillis, “the really strange development of the eighteenth century was the transformation of the Gothic narrative into an adult genre, when it had really belonged to children’s literature all along” (Jackson, Coats and McGillis 2008: 2). Their volume seeks to authenticate the Gothic Age by locating its origins at the very beginning of children’s literature itself. However, the retroactive claim that Gothic was a children’s form from the outset reads the oral tradition, the folk tale and the chapbook tradition, which all existed prior to both Walpole’s novel and the development of children’s literature proper, as belonging to children. Such a claim is difficult to sustain when one considers the fact that the term “children” employed by contemporary children’s literature critics did not carry anything like the same meanings in the eighteenth century, and that early forms of print literature could not *belong* to a group that simply did not exist at the time. However, the writers’ implication that children’s literature as we know it developed in an erroneous direction, away from its “true” nature, means that the current Gothic Age publications can be revealed as authentic and legitimate.

So, why is the “Victorian” period most often evoked in contemporary Gothic fictions? Why do writers not go further back, to beyond the beginning of children’s literature as we know it? Rather than attempting to locate a historically accurate location prior to the development of children’s literature proper, contemporary children’s Gothic instead invokes a quasi-past, a nebulous Victorian/Edwardian/eighteenth-century/Gothic age. In this Gothic past, material is reclaimed as Gothic regardless of its original reception or context: chapbook thrills and Penny Dreadful criminals appear in F.E. Higgins’s *Tales from the Sinister City* series (2007–); folk and literary fairytales are gothicized by Neil Gaiman; Victorian ghost stories are rewritten in Chris Priestley’s *Tales of Terror* (2007–); and Gothic melodrama is lovingly pastiched in Lemony Snicket’s *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999–). References to adult Gothic fictions of the nineteenth century – *Jekyll and Hyde* (1886), *Dracula* (1897) *Dorian Gray* (1890), and *Frankenstein* (1818) – abound in Gothic Age fictions because these are more familiar than earlier Gothic texts. The “Victorian” functions as a generative point, legitimizing Gothic Age fictions by rooting them in the past. But at the same time, the newly Gothic “Victorian” reveals its own counterfeit nature and the falsity of this authentication.

Jackson, Coats and McGillis are certainly correct in their assertion that the situation in contemporary children’s literature is like nothing before. Undeniably, there *has* been a genuine profusion of Gothic in children’s fiction in the past decade, even if its absence before this date has been somewhat overemphasized. Moreover, the critical environment for its reception is also transformed from the latter years of

the twentieth century, when horror for children was generally seen as “bad” literature or, even worse, as potentially harmful to young minds. Intriguing, though, is the way that contemporary critics legitimize the Gothic Age within the same discourse that sought to eradicate Gothic in the first place.

Victorian reformer James Greenwood and his contemporaries wanted to save children by stamping out the pernicious influence of the Penny Dreadful; now critics want to save children by giving them thumb amputation (Greenwood 1874; Leith 2009). Neil Gaiman, Sam Leith and others project onto childhood a delight in fear, while simultaneously also needing that fear to serve a pastoral, maturational function. Jackson, Coats and McGillis, for example, claim that “children today would be more likely to enjoy the chapbook romances . . . of *Raw Head and Bloody Bones*” (Jackson, Coats and McGillis 2008: 2). As well as presuming to know a child reader, they also want to ensure that any pleasure a child derives from terror takes a pastoral or educational form. For them, the *good* Gothic text allows us “to take the hauntedness of our lives as an opportunity for strength”; Gothic reminds the child reader that “the world is not safe” but allows them to negotiate that danger successfully (Jackson, Coats and McGillis 2008: 12–13). Despite their praise for Gothic’s subversive energies, its “unrestraint, transgression, and . . . overturning of normalcy,” they still remain in a critical discourse that centers on finding the “good” book for the child to help the child grow and learn (Jackson, Coats and McGillis 2008: 13; Lesnik-Oberstein 2004). Their rejection of Romantic “innocence” is a reversal, reading childhood instead as the site of trauma. Nonetheless, children’s fiction should still function to soothe and teach, and Gothic fiction is praised because it will allow children to navigate those traumas most successfully.

Maurice Sendak, author of *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), an enduringly popular picture book dramatizing the child’s mastery of his wild Freudian Id, claimed that his works refused “to cater to the bullshit of innocence” (Sendak in Brookes 2011). Sendak’s many disciples, including Leith and Gaiman, echo his insistence that children *need* fear. This fear, however, should not be the oppressive fear of eighteenth-century moral didacticism; it should be, says Leith, “more open, more ambient: Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* is a good example. It’s unsettling rather than scary: it exists in its own world” (Leith 2009). This invokes a positive psychic function for fear, picked up on in the works of Gaiman too, which is heavily indebted to psychoanalytical ideas of maturation. This is also part of the continuing need in children’s criticism to legitimize the project of children’s literature in its entirety. By making it more terrifying, we make it more important. This is not just escapism, fantasy, the “bullshit of innocence”: this is vital work.

The current Gothic Age has come about because of a perceived absence of Gothic fictions for children. Writers and critics experience that absence keenly, and declare that children need horror: they need to be scared. The reading child that this narrative constructs is one for whom horror provides a psychic function, allowing them to grow, develop their creativity and, ultimately, subvert the oppressive ideological tendencies of the children’s literature of the past 150 years. In this way, Gothic fiction will save our children. Writers and publishers rush to fill the imagined gap, to right/write a terrible wrong: Gothic should have belonged to children all along. This is all part of a discourse that seeks to gothicize childhood as a site of trauma as well

as one that wants to celebrate the Gothic possibilities of childhood. This discourse is authenticated through reclaiming the “nineteenth century” as Gothic. In a fundamentally nostalgic move, contemporary children’s Gothic returns to the past even as it makes a claim to move children’s literature forward.

Thus, contemporary children’s Gothic invokes the past not as somewhere to abject present-day fears, as with Hogle’s Gothic “ghost of the counterfeit” (Hogle 2001), nor simply as sterile pastiche. Contemporary children’s Gothic yearns for the Gothic to materialize, to authenticate its own origins even while acknowledging the counterfeit nature of these origins themselves. Hence the proliferation of “real” texts in the pages of its books: scraps, letters, torn articles, intertextual references to older works and writers such as Dickens, M.R. James and Poe. Such metafictional strategies are both nostalgically playful and heavily invested with desire for childhood. In the current age, though, this childhood is resolutely Gothic.

REFERENCES

- Brookes, E. (2011) “Maurice Sendak: ‘I refuse to lie to children,’” *The Guardian*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/oct/02/maurice-sendak-interview>> (accessed September 9, 2012).
- Dunae, P. (1979) “Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys’ Literature and Crime,” *Victorian Studies*, 22: 133–50.
- Errigo, A. (2010) “Review of *Alice in Wonderland*.” *Empire*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.empireonline.com/reviews/reviewcomplete.asp?FID=135686>> (accessed September 9, 2012).
- Greenwood, J. (1874) “Penny Packets of Poison,” *The Wilds of London*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.victorianlondon.org/publications3/wilds-15.htm>> (accessed September 9, 2012).
- Grenby, M. (2007) “Chapbooks, Children, and Children’s Literature,” *The Library*, 8.3: 277–303.
- (2009) “Children’s Literature: Birth, Infancy, Maturity,” in J. Maybin and N. Watson (eds) *Children’s Literature: Approaches and Territories*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 39–56.
- Haining, P. (1975) *The Penny Dreadful, or, Strange, Horrid and Sensational Tales*, London: Victor Gollancz.
- Hoffmann, H. (1848) *Struwwelpeter: Merry Tales and Funny Pictures*, New York.
- Hutcheon, L. (1998) *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.
- Jackson, A., Coats, K. and McGillis, R. (2008) “Introduction,” *The Gothic in Children’s Literature: Haunting the Borders*, New York: Routledge, 1–14.
- Jameson, F. (1998) *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983–1998*, London: Verso.
- Hogle, J. (2001) “The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Progress of Abjection,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A Companion to the Gothic*, London: Blackwell, 293–304.
- Lamb, C. (1821) “Witches and Other Night Fears,” *London Magazine*, 5: 384–87.
- Lang, M. (1980) “Childhood’s Champions: Mid-Victorian Children’s Periodicals and the Critics,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 13: 17–31.
- Leith, S. (2009) “Do you know what today’s kids need? Thumb amputation, that’s what,” *The Guardian*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/nov/01/sam-leith-childrens-films-books>> (accessed September 9, 2012).
- Lesnik-Oberstein, K. (2000) “The Psychopathology of Everyday Children’s Literature Criticism,” *Cultural Critique*, 45: 222–42.

- (2004) “Introduction,” *Children’s Literature: New Approaches*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–24.
- Lewis, V. (2012) “Preview of July Books,” *The Bookseller*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.annefine.co.uk/books/devilwalks.php>> (accessed August 30, 2012).
- Merritt, S. (2010) “Review of *The Bone Magician*,” *The Observer*, March, 23rd: 23.
- Ouzounian, R. (2009) “Author returns to ‘first girlfriend’: interview with Neil Gaiman,” *The Star*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/article/583129-author-returns-to-first-girlfriend>> (accessed September 9, 2012).
- Priestley, C. (2012a) “A Ghost Story.” Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.talesof-terror.co.uk/unclem.html>> (accessed August 30, 2012).
- (2012b) “Boys will be boys.” Online. Available HTTP: <<http://chrispriestley.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/boys-will-be-boys.html>> (accessed May 30, 2012).
- (2012c) “Finished . . . ish,” Online. Available HTTP: <<http://chrispriestley.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/finishedish.html>> (accessed May 30, 2012).
- Pullman, P. (2002) “Review of *Coraline*,” *The Guardian*, August 31st: 33.
- Riddell, C. (2009) “Books for Children”. *The Telegraph*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/5720639/Summer-Reading-for-Children-Adventures-to-enchancing-worlds.html>> (accessed November 13, 2012).
- Salmon, E. (1888) *Juvenile Literature As It Is*, London: Henry J. Drane.
- Seymenliyska, E. (2011) “Children’s Books: Fantasy 9–12”, *The Telegraph*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/8623043/Childrens-Books-Fantasy-9-12.html>> (accessed November 13, 2012).
- Spooner, C. (2007) “Gothic in the Twentieth Century,” in C. Spooner and E. McEvoy (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, London: Routledge, 38–47.
- Springhall, J. (1994) “‘Pernicious Reading’? The Penny Dreadful as Scapegoat for Late-Victorian Juvenile Crime,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 27: 326–49.
- Turner, E. (1948) *Boys will be Boys*, London: M. Joseph.
- White, G. (2010) “Book Review: *The Lunatic’s Curse* by F.E. Higgins,” *Stirling Observer*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.stirlingobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/arts-stirling/2010/07/09/book-review-the-lunatic-s-curse-by-fe-higgins-51226-26812686/>> (accessed November 13, 2012).
- Zipes, J. (1983) *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, New York: Routledge.
- (2002) *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*, New York: Routledge.

FURTHER READING

- Brennan, G., Reynolds, K. and McCarron, K. (eds) (2001) *Frightening Fiction*, London: Continuum. (Published at the very beginning of the post-millennial explosion of Gothic, this volume interrogates horror fiction of the 1980s and 1990s.)
- Brooker, W. (2004) *Alice’s Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture*, London: Continuum. (Explores a wide range of interpretations of Carroll and his work from the twentieth century, including Alice in Disney and American McGee’s *Alice*.)
- Lesnik-Oberstein, K. (ed.) (2004) *Children’s Literature: New Approaches*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (This volume of criticism aims to differ from traditional children’s literature criticism in offering thinking that does not rest on – overtly or indirectly – a “real child.”)

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

GOTHIC SENSATIONS,
1850–1880

Franz J. Potter

There is a clear and constant misconception that the Gothic genre, after enjoying a season of literary success, took a long and well-deserved sabbatical following the publication of Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* in 1820. This misconception is due in large part to what William Harrison Ainsworth described in his 1849 preface to *Rookwood* (1834) as the excessive “rubbish” of imitations and adaptations that cluttered the Gothic landscape (Ainsworth 1849: xxxviii). Ainsworth predicted that once what another detractor had termed these “literary mushrooms” (Anon. 1797: 34) were finally and permanently extracted, and the genre placed in “the hand of the skillful architect to its entire renovation,” the Gothic would eventually find its “perfection” (Ainsworth 1849: xxxviii). While some critics see the fruition of Ainsworth's prophecy in the *fin-de-siècle* novels of Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde and Robert Louis Stevenson, the tendency runs the risk of ignoring and overlooking the manifold “Gothic sensations” of the mid-Victorian period (see Chapter 10 in this volume). For the truth is that the genre never disappeared in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century; on the contrary, it flourished. This chapter examines the way in which sensational fiction domesticated, appropriated and transformed the Gothic through the works of Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon.

SENSATIONAL FICTION/GOTHIC SENSATION

The publication of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* in 1860 sparked an unparalleled literary revolution. What would come to be known as sensation fiction drew on a variety of popular forms, including melodrama, Dickensian realism and “real-life” crimes and scandals recorded in newspaper reports of the day. Sensation novels drew their intricate plots from contemporary scandalous events such as bigamy, adultery, fraud, madness, sexual deviance and murder, especially acts of this ilk that were committed by otherwise moral and upright members of society. Collins's novel was rapidly followed by Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), and with these works, sensation fiction came to focus attention on the horrors that lurked within bourgeois worlds, with

particular interest in the home. While the genre's popularity provoked unease and antagonism on the part of the literary establishment, the novels themselves were a "sensation" amongst readers eager to be shocked, scandalized and horrified.

At the heart of this phenomenon of "sensational" fiction is the domestication of some of the early Gothic's primary themes and motifs. Here, the horrors once located in distant lands and times become uncomfortably close and all too familiar. The Gothic villain gives way to common criminals found in contemporary urban environments, striking at the heart of Victorian society in their exposure of family secrets, their transgressions of social prohibition and the doubts they raise around notions of character and identity. The proximity of fear, as Henry James writes in an 1865 essay titled "Miss Braddon," is the most salient feature of these fictions, and it was Collins, he claims, who introduced into literature

those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors. This innovation gave a new impetus to the literature of horrors. It was fatal to the authority of Mrs Radcliffe and her everlasting castle in the Apennines. What are the Apennines to us, or we to the Apennines? Instead of the terrors of "Udolpho," we are treated to the terrors of the cheerful country-house and the busy London lodgings. And there is no doubt that these were infinitely the more terrible.

(James 1921: 593)

Fundamentally, there are two varieties of Gothic sensation novels, though each centers on the female protagonist. The first mode of sensation fiction works within the Gothic convention of the heroine imprisoned within the home or incarcerated within a religious establishment such as a convent. In the fashion of Laura Glyde and Ann Catherick in *The Woman in White*, these texts question individual identity, and explore the transgression of the home as a site charged in the mid-Victorian period with quasi-sacred values. In the second, women follow the well-worn Gothic tradition of the female villain. Like the bigamous and deadly Lucy Graham in Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, the female characters in these novels provoke anxieties about the instability of identity and the breakdown of gender roles. Sensation fiction then adapts fundamental features of the early Gothic and moves them into a contemporary and urban framework. The central narrative is focused on secrets concealed by an individual, usually through false identities, secrets which are often revealed and disclosed by anecdotal facts pertaining to their former lives. Mysteries no longer dwell in the past, but in the drawing room of the house just down the street: the proximity is disconcerting not only to the characters involved, but also to the readers who ponder and negotiate them. The lines between good and evil are blurred, and the sins of the past lie waiting to be discovered by blackmailing criminals and crime-mongering detectives alike. The modern family is truly threatened by the Gothic horrors that are to be found lurking just beneath the floorboards of almost every seemingly respectable home.

SERIALIZING GOTHIC SENSATIONS

One of the most intriguing aspects of nineteenth-century sensation fiction is that these novels were originally often serialized, and then bound and sold in bookstores

or lodged in circulating libraries. The sensational novel, like the Gothic romance of the previous century, was the product of mass popular culture. Disparaged as merely a commodity, novels were rapidly produced for sale. As they did during the first Gothic wave (1764–1820), contemporary literary critics scoffed at the public's demand for more sensational novels, and attributed this demand to the ruthless designs of profiteering publishers and their armies of hack writers. Such cultural factors as the sudden growth of weekly and monthly periodicals, the rise in number of circulating libraries and the increasing prominence of railway bookstalls encouraged publishers to produce a variety of publications to meet the demands of an ever-enlarging and diversifying readership. Novels were made to be bought and sold, even if not actually read, on a mass scale that was hitherto quite unprecedented. Serial publication in the period boosted the readership of magazines and journals, and magazine publishing remained a highly competitive business. To maintain interest in their periodicals, publishers sought Gothic horror fiction, Newgate novels of crime, detective stories, sensational tales and the more decadent Gothic fiction to issue in installments or excerpts.

The Gothic genre, of course, has a long history of publication in periodicals, one that stretches back to the eighteenth century. Several full-length Gothic novels, including George Moore's *Grasville Abbey: A Romance* and the co-written *The Monks and the Robbers*, appeared in the *Lady's Magazine* (1770–1837). *Grasville Abbey* (March 1793–August 1797) ran to some 47 installments, and narrates a Radcliffean adaptation of the torments of the Maserini family over two generations as they are revealed by the hermit, Father Peter, at the eponymous Grasville Abbey. *The Monks and the Robbers, A Tale* (August–November 1794; April 1798–May 1805) appeared over an astonishing eleven-year period in 53 installments. Begun by Mary Meeke, who abandoned the work after three installments, *The Monks and the Robber* was completed by a volunteer, one A. Percy, and was eventually bound and sold in two volumes. Similarly, Gothic novelist Catherine Cuthbertson's *Romance of the Pyrenees* (February 1804–7) was serialized in the *Lady's Magazine* after a warehouse fire burnt most extant copies of the novel and it was deemed economically unviable to reprint. Even at the time of its supposed demise in 1820, the Gothic frequently appeared, serialized and in magazines. For instance, Polidori's *The Vampyre* appeared in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine* in 1819 and William Harrison Ainsworth's satanic *Auriol* was issued in *Ainsworth's Magazine* from 1844 to 1846. Penny Dreadfuls, like James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire*, ran in serial form in the period 1845–47, a publishing event that did much to keep the Gothic flame in the mid-Victorian period very much alive. The dissemination of these works in varied forms further allowed readers in rural areas and abroad to access them, attracting a large and rather dedicated audience.

Sensation fiction likewise utilized the serial format to great success. Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* first appeared in Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round* between November 26, 1859 and August 25, 1860; the text also ran simultaneously in *Harper's Weekly* between November 26, 1859 and August 4, 1860. The first bound edition, published by Sampson Low, appeared between August 15–16, 1860, its appearance timed to capitalize on the interest that the tale was generating in the periodicals. *Lady Audley's Secret* appeared in *Robin Goodfellow* in July 1861, but was cut short by the magazine's discontinuation in September of the same year.

It reappeared in *The Sixpenny Magazine* in monthly installments between February 1862 and January 1863. The first bound edition was published by William Tinsley in October 1862, with a further seven additional editions produced before December 1862. To preserve the readers' interest, authors would often end each installment with a cliffhanger. Installments appeared on a month-to-month or week-to-week timetable, the technique Dickens introduced with the publication of *Pickwick Papers* (1836–37) and continued with *Oliver Twist* (1837–39). As a working style, installments allowed authors to work on multiple novels simultaneously.

RELOCATING THE GOTHIC: CHARLES DICKENS

Dickens's role in the development of Gothic sensations cannot be overstated. He is, in part, responsible for altering our entire view of Victorian London, moving the Gothic from the remote to the familiar, and awakening the horrors in the very heart of a modern metropolis. While some earlier Gothic novels, such as Sarah Wilkinson's *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey* (1820) and the anonymous *The Ruins of Ruthvale Abbey* (1831), attempted to accommodate realist modes of description into the genre, they failed successfully to unite the horrors of urban existence in contemporary London with Gothic sensibilities.

Dickens's predilection for Gothic conventions is well known. As Robert Mighall apropos of Dickens has argued,

the Gothic had changed; and no small part of this transformation is down to Dickens, whose works stand to refute the notion that the Gothic went away. For in terms of innovation and influence . . . no writer has a greater claim to importance in the history of the Gothic during its supposed sabbatical than Dickens.
(Mighall 2008: 82)

In such novels as *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Bleak House* (1852–53), Dickens demonstrates his skilled enlisting of the Gothic in the service of realism. London's dark, narrow streets and dangerous lanes replace the subterranean passages of the castle found in older Gothic novels as the established center of terror specific to modern urban experience. Stripping away the glamorized lives of outlaws with Sikes's violent murder of Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens forcibly appropriates terror and horror for the representation of contemporary Victorian London:

Of all bad deeds that, under cover of the darkness, had been committed within wide London's bounds since night hung over it, that was the worst. Of all the horrors that rose with an ill scent upon the morning air, that was the foulest and most cruel.

(Dickens 1966: 60)

By rendering the gloomy, crime-ridden streets of London as Gothic haunts, Dickens positions the dark suburban narratives of the sensational novel at the very heart of the city and one step closer to the reader and his or her domain.

In Dickens's own proto-sensation novel, *Great Expectations* (1861), a reliance on the Gothic led him to make use of another familiar Gothic convention: feminine

incarceration. Female imprisonment, of course, had been a standard device of Gothic fiction, from Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) to Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860). In the model developed by Radcliffe, females are the victims of male dominance or exploitation, and, as such, are characteristically confined in a castle or convent. Dickens, however, looks to an older model of female imprisonment, one crafted by Horace Walpole in *The Mysterious Mother* (1768), when figuring the character of Miss Havisham. Walpole's drama centers on Edmund, son of the Countess Narbonne, who, banished by his mother, returns home to claim his inheritance. The Countess has immured herself in the castle for 16 years, shunning the company of all those around her except for a young ward, Adeliza, whom she raises in seclusion. Edmund, to atone for his misconduct, marries the orphan Adeliza. However, it is eventually revealed that, unbeknown to the hero, Adeliza is actually the offspring of Edmund's original transgression, an act of sexual congress which took place not with Beatrice the maid, as he has long assumed, but incestuously with his own mother: in a spectacular trope of double-incest, Edmund has unconsciously married his own sister/daughter. The Countess, who, since the fatal night, has concealed the secret, stabs herself, Edmund returns to the battlefield and Adeliza retires to a convent. Walpole's self-imposed female imprisonment provides Dickens with a means of sensationalizing the confinement of a woman who is unable to forget the past. The Countess Narbonne and Miss Havisham both immure themselves in the very locations of their greatest accomplishments and prospects: the home. The home becomes the prison, not by force, but by choice. The past, so central to early Gothic works, becomes inescapable, and simultaneously a location of refuge and pain. The home is exposed as a site of both love and horror. Dickens's influence on sensation fiction and the Gothic in general cannot be overlooked, and undoubtedly his sensationalist exposure of Lady Dedlock's affair with the impecunious Nemo/Captain Hawdon in *Bleak House*, serialized in twenty monthly installments between March 1852 and September 1853, laid the groundwork for other novelists such as Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, both of whom would further define and demarcate the genre in the 1860s and 1870s.

ADAPTING THE NARRATIVE: WILKIE COLLINS

Nowhere in sensational fiction is the Gothic more prevalent than in the works of Wilkie Collins. From *The Woman in White* (1860) to *Armada* (1866) to *The Moonstone* (1868), Collins's familiarity with older Gothic fictions, particularly those written in the Radcliffean mode of terror, allowed him to explore the urban landscape, not only by utilizing Gothic motifs and conventions, but also ultimately adapting the narrative structure itself. Early Gothic novels such as Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) were replete with inset tales, stories-within-stories and illegible manuscripts that ultimately held the clues to the entire narrative. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has argued, "Of all the Gothic conventions dealing with the sudden, mysterious, seemingly arbitrary, but massive inaccessibility of those things that should normally be most accessible, the difficulty the story has in getting itself told is of the most obvious structural significance" (Sedgwick 1986:13). The

apparent “inaccessibility” of the narrative is often the result of complex, cumbersome and awkwardly placed inset tales. The main plot is routinely interrupted with tales designed to reveal the past. A discovered fragmentary manuscript is likely to reveal the traumatic personal history of a murder victim or explain and account for their imprisonment in a desolate castle. A letter received can often elucidate the actions of the villain or hero, and thus serve in the resolution of a narrative enigma. Occasionally these tales provide the moral subtext, interposing a sense of morality and decency in the same gesture that they reveal the past. The result, quite often, is an exceptionally convoluted narrative structure.

While lengthy Gothic novels thrived in the literary marketplace, a secondary market of short tales of terror merged in the late eighteenth century as a direct response to the triple-decker format. The Gothic chapbooks were short 36- to 72-page tales of terror and horror, often consisting of extracts from, or plagiarisms of, entire subplots from other well-known Gothic novels (see Chapter 16 in this volume). Chapbooks marked the vulgarization of the pastiche-ridden Gothic mode, the simplification of its intricate and convoluted plots and the distillation of its verbose sublime descriptions into simple tales of terror. They were enjoyed by readers in their thousands, readers who were eager to obtain tales of terror in their simplest and crudest of forms. Exceedingly popular, these texts were sold on street corners and found in circulating libraries throughout Britain and North America. *The Horrible Revenge* (1828), for example, was extracted from Eliza Parsons’s *The Mysterious Warning* (1796) and *Raymond & Agnes; Or, The Bleeding Nun of the Castle of Lindenberg* (n.d.) was extracted from Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) verbatim.

Publishers were quick to recognize the economic potential of these short tales of terror. By 1825, Gothic anthologies, collections and magazines such as the *Story-Teller*, *Tell-Tale Magazine* and *Legends of Terror!* were publishing short tales of terror for a growing audience. It was the success of the chapbook and the short tale of terror that encouraged the editors of periodicals to enliven their pages with sensational fiction. But these tales often lose some of their power when read one after another; they are most effective when read individually in a periodical. *Blackwood’s Magazine* was especially famous for its tales, the best of which have been collected and published separately. Under the editorship of Dickens, *All the Year Round* often included tales of terror and the supernatural, including Collins’s *The Woman in White*, an epistolary novel written in 40 installments, the first of which appeared in November 1858.

The simple narrative structure of chapbooks, and, later, tales of terror in periodicals, was retained in the Gothic sensations of Collins’s novel, with installments consisting of one to three sections or chapters. Each installment, told from a single point of view, allowed Collins to adapt the simple Gothic structure and present the narrative as a collection of documents, journals, correspondences and legal forms, each told by one of a range of different witnesses. The central narrative relates the story of Walter Hartright, a young drawing-master, who has secured a position in Cumberland. On the road from Hampstead to London, he meets a mysterious woman, dressed in white, who has recently escaped from an asylum. He travels north to Limmeridge House, where he meets Mr Frederick Fairlie, his niece Laura Fairlie, and Marian Halcombe, her half-sister. Hartright finds that Laura bears an

astonishing resemblance to the woman in white, Anne Catherick. Anne grew up in Cumberland and was devoted to Laura's mother, who first dressed her in white. Collins utilizes the standard Radcliffean model of romance as Hartright and Laura fall in love, but as it turns out, she is already engaged to Sir Percival Glyde. The mysterious Anne Catherick sends a letter to Laura warning her about Glyde and meets Hartright who is convinced that Glyde is responsible for her imprisonment in the asylum. Laura and Glyde marry, and Hartright joins an expedition to Honduras. The text is replete with Gothic motifs. Like Montoni in relation to Emily St Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Sir Percival, albeit unsuccessfully, attempts to coerce Laura into signing a document which would allow him to use her marriage settlement of £20,000. The woman in white reappears, promising to reveal a secret which will ruin Glyde forever. Marian eavesdrops on Fosco and Glyde, but is caught in a rainstorm and develops typhus. Laura is deceived into traveling to London and is placed in an asylum under the name Anne Catherick. The real Anne Catherick dies of a heart condition and is buried as Laura. Marian recovers and visits Anne Catherick, suffering in the asylum under the illusion that she is Lady Glyde, but only to discover Laura. Together, they bribe the attendant and escape.

Collins's use of personal histories and fragmentary documents here is essential to revealing the real and imagined crimes of both Glyde and Fosco; consequently, individual histories are only disclosed in order to influence the present as well as to underline and heighten the mystery. While each narrative contributes, in part, to the revelation of the crimes, they are nonetheless intrusive in their own ways. The most shocking narrative is perhaps Marian's diary, a story in which the reader not only intrudes upon the private thoughts and actions of Marian, but also ultimately becomes an active participant. In true sensational form, the most shocking discovery is made at the end of the narrative, when the reader learns that Count Fosco has not only read the journal, but also added his own postscript.

In the end, Hartright proves Laura's journey to London took place after the date on the death certificate. He likewise discovers that Glyde forged his parent's name on the marriage register at Old Welmingham Church, thus concealing his illegitimacy. However, in an attempt at destroying the register, Glyde accidentally sets the church vestry on fire and perishes in the flames. Hartright also discovers that Anne was the illegitimate child of Laura's father, a fact which accounts for Laura and Anne's physical resemblance.

Collins's reliance on the Gothic in *The Woman in White* is also evident in his approach to familiar themes found in short tales of terror and chapbooks. The emphasis on the burdens of the guilty past, for instance, lends a decidedly Gothic strain to a mode of fiction that is otherwise preoccupied upon the occurrences of modern, everyday life. In fact, Collins's *The Woman in White* can also be read as an ancestral curse narrative. At the conclusion of the narrative, Walter Hartright decides to solve the mystery surrounding Anne Catherick in oddly moral terms, namely with the well-known "sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children" motif that first made its appearance in *The Castle of Otranto*. While ancestral curse tales like Walpole's had framed the entire narrative in moralistic terms, thus creating the expectation of the eventual distribution of justice at the end, Hartright casually stumbles upon the answer to the woman in white's mysterious connection to the Fairlie family. In true Radcliffean style, Collins wraps up the narrative with a

marriage and the resolution of all mysteries. Hartright, with the assistance of Professor Pesca, attempts to trap Count Fosco, who recognizes Pesca as a fellow member of a secret society. Hartright extracts a written confession from Fosco, and Laura's identity is finally reestablished. Hartright and Laura are married, and, upon the death of her uncle Frederick Fairlie, their son becomes the heir of Limmeridge. The reader is thus assured that while the setting may be contemporary, and the family-life that it presents considerably threatened, all mysteries will eventually be resolved, all secrets bared and explained, and the holiness of the Victorian hearth and home duly preserved.

MARRIAGE AND MADNESS: MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON

While Collins's *Gothic sensations* retain the hope of future social and familial stability, Mary Elizabeth Braddon carefully removes that domestic certainty by striking at the heart of Victorian sensibilities. Inspired by the terrifying case of the real-life murderess Constance Kent, *Lady Audley's Secret* caused a sensation by subverting the conventional Victorian notion of the angel in the house with the terrifying possibility of madness. Despite its dependence on standard Gothic motifs, it would be a mistake to read *Lady Audley's Secret* as a mere adaptation of the Radcliffean tale of terror in a contemporary context. In this 1862 Gothic sensation, Braddon reimagines the imprisoned wife within the rigid double standards of Victorian patriarchy.

Lady Audley's Secret begins with a marriage, the place where most Gothic novels in the earlier romance tradition ended. When the young and beautiful Lucy Graham weds the widower Sir Michael Audley, little is known of her past. After the mysterious disappearance of his friend George Talboys, Sir Audley's nephew Robert initiates an investigation of his step-aunt, revealing her clandestine life of conspiracy, murder and madness. It is discovered that Lucy, once known as Helen Maldon, had married George Talboys, but that he had abandoned her and their infant son in order to seek his fortune in Australia. His untimely return threatened not only her new identity, but her newfound social status too.

Braddon rejects the traditional plot element of marriage and the imprisoned wife familiar to readers of Gothic romance, drawing instead upon a model that Gothic novelist and chapbook author Sarah Wilkinson developed in the early nineteenth century. *Lady Audley's Secret* adapts elements of Wilkinson's 1804 chapbook, *The Wife of Two Husbands*, which claimed to be a translation from the French drama of the *La femme à deux maris* (1802) by René-Charles Guilbert, but was actually based on the musical adaptation, *The Wife of Two Husbands* (1803), by James Cobb. The short tale narrates the story of Eliza, who married Isidore Fritz against her father's wishes. A con-man, Fritz fakes his own death in prison, and believing herself now a widow, Eliza marries the elderly Count Belfoir. Years later, Fritz returns to claim both his wife and her property. Caught between duty to a husband whom she loves and a man whom she despises, Eliza concedes that she should leave the Count, but his friend recognizes Fritz as a deserter and has him immediately arrested. Spared the death-penalty through Eliza's intercession, Fritz repays her kindness by attempting to murder the Count, but is himself slain.

Like Wilkinson, Braddon frames her tale of Gothic sensation with an unstable first marriage. George, only son of Sir Harcourt Talboys, followed his heart and

married a beautiful woman with no markers of social worth and was consequently cast off by his father, resulting in a desperate quest for money to support a young wife and child. In a moment of desperation George deserts his family, traveling to Australia to find his fortune. Abandoned, Helen is not only faced with the uncertainty of George being alive or dead, but with the specter of abject poverty too. While there are many similarities between Wilkinson's chapbook and Braddon's sensational Gothic – both women mistakenly believe their first husbands to be dead, and both are confronted by the horror of their contrasting duties – the difference between the two texts lies in the emphases they respectively come to place upon the importance of duty within a marriage. For Wilkinson, duty ought to supersede all other desires, and a woman is eventually obliged to subjugate her own wishes to the demands of the marriage vow. For Braddon, by contrast, marriage constitutes a woman's imprisonment in an institution that binds one party with certain rules and restrictions that are flagrantly flouted and disregarded by the other.

Braddon's interest in Wilkinson's model, however, is directly founded in its masculine perspective. There are a number of broad similarities between Braddon's George Talboys and Wilkinson's Isidore Fritz. While *The Wife of Two Husbands* focuses on the dreadful circumstance from the viewpoint of the wife, Eliza remains powerless and is presented as merely a form of property in the marriage contract. Like Wilkinson, Braddon allows the reader to view Helen as part-victim, part-villain, thus blurring the line between good and evil. While Lucy is a victim of abandonment, Braddon does not allow the reader to maintain much sympathy for the rejected wife. Where Isidore Fritz attempts to murder his wife's husband, Lucy Graham attempts to murder her first husband. The shift in criminality here relocates compassion away from victim to villain, problematizing the clear demarcations of conventional morality as it does so.

This muddling of morality allows Braddon to revisit the now familiar Gothic convention of the imprisoned female in *Lady Audley's Secret*. Lucy's deception and murderous intentions are not only deemed dangerous by the Audley family's amateur detective Robert, but also by Lucy herself, who tries to justify her actions in terms of a familial condition of madness. A local Doctor finds that Lucy indeed has the "potential" for latent insanity, which could make her very dangerous, but he cannot diagnose madness with any degree of certainty. Like Radcliffe's Madame Mazzini before her, Lady Audley's fate is determined by the male members of the family who ultimately arrange to have Lucy entombed and "buried alive" in an asylum. What prompts this is not the assumption that she is genetically disposed to insanity from her mother, but the fact that her past crimes are likely to bring disgrace upon the family. Hidden away, Lucy becomes the Audley family's buried secret, and order, for the moment, is duly restored. However, unlike Collins, Braddon's restoration of social and familial order comes at a price, as the family's secret is merely brushed under the rug and not ever truly resolved.

The persistence of Gothic conventions and motifs in sensational fiction of the 1860s and 1870s suggests that the Gothic, like those buried alive by secrets, continued to thrive long after its apparent demise with the publication of *Melmoth the Wanderer* in 1820. Authors such as Dickens, Collins and Braddon simply appropriated and adapted the Gothic for a readership which viewed their urban surroundings as prime locations for Gothic terror, and society itself as the source of Gothic horror.

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, W.H. (1849) *Rookwood: A Romance*, 1834, London.
Anon. (1797) *The Use of Circulating Libraries Considered; With Instructions for Opening and Conducting a Library*, London.
Dickens, C. (1966) *Oliver Twist*, 1838, ed. P. Fairclough, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
James, H. (1921) “Miss Braddon,” 1865, *Notes and Reviews*, with preface by P. de Chaignon la Rose, Cambridge, MA: Dunster House, 108–16.
Mighall, R. (2008) “Dickens and the Gothic,” in D. Paroissien (ed.) *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 81–96.
Sedgwick, E.K. (1986) *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, 1976, London: Methuen.

FURTHER READING

- Hughes, W. (1980) *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. (One of the first important studies of the sensation novel.)
Mighall, R. (1999) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Particularly useful on Dickens and Collins.)
Pykett, L. (1992) *The Improper Feminine: The Women’s Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*, London: Routledge. (Another standard study of the sensation novel with a focus on women writers.)
Potter, F. (2005) *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835: Exhuming the Trade*, London: Palgrave Macmillan. (Considers the publishing of serialized fiction in the early nineteenth century.)
Punter, D. and Byron, G. (eds) (2004) *The Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell. (Discussion of sensation fiction in section on Victorian Gothic.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

YOUNG ADULTS AND THE CONTEMPORARY GOTHIC



Hannah Priest

This chapter offers a critical analysis of the use of what might be termed Gothic tropes, motifs and themes in the newly emergent genre of young adult (YA) “dark” or “paranormal” romance (Wood and Stone 2011). As I will show, Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* series, comprising *Twilight* (2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008), is often situated as a *locus classicus* by other texts within the genre; as such, my examination will be led by a consideration of Meyer’s vampire series and its filmic adaptations. However, I will offer other examples from the genre, to illustrate the ways in which central concepts are handled across texts and to offer some sense of generic convention. The defining terms of this chapter – “young adult” and “contemporary” – are guided by marketing labels rather than critical or cultural theory. Alison Waller has indicated some of the issues inherent in the term “young adults”: “the label is not often recognised and usually refers less to the age, experience or social group, and more to the products and lifestyle aimed at that sector” (Waller 2009: 9). Chris Richards argues for an even more contextually specific understanding of the term: although the “category has some continuing, if confused, meaning in book publishing,” there are “no ‘young adult’ films and TV shows” (Richards 2008: 8). Further confusion is added by the abbreviation of “young adult” to YA, thus removing any clear indicator of either youth or adulthood, and the lack of clarity regarding the intended audience of YA or “teen” narratives. As such, my use of the term “young adult” is determined by the generic descriptors used by the publishing industry, rather than with reference to an intended readership. Given the centrality of Meyer’s vampire series to this genre, my use of “contemporary” is based on the publication date of Meyer’s *Twilight*.

VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, ZOMBIES, GIRLS

While supernatural elements are not required in order for a text to be classified as Gothic, the inclusion of supernatural beings (in particular vampires, or other creatures in the liminal zone between life and death) can function as a shorthand way of identifying a text’s participation in the Gothic. As such, many YA texts include

vampires, but novels also include fallen angels, werewolves, fairies and witches. Some works include less easily categorized creatures; in Ann Brashares's *My Name Is Memory* (2010), for instance, the prologue – narrated by the male love interest – begins: “I have lived more than a thousand years. I have died countless times. I forget precisely how many times” (Brashares 2010: 1). YA paranormal romances also feature mermaids, ghosts, zombies and demons, hitting a ludic and ludicrous height with the 2010 short story anthology *Zombies vs. Unicorns*, which combines light-hearted and self-referentially satirical editorial comment with stories about cannibalism and bestiality.

While *Zombies vs. Unicorns* offers a knowing nod to the supernatural saturation of YA fiction, other novels evoke the supernatural without actually containing any zombies, werewolves, vampires or other such beings. An example of this is Cat Clarke's *Entangled* (2011). In the opening pages, seventeen-year-old Grace wakes up in a white room, apparently being held captive by a mysterious (and beautiful) young man named Ethan. Her first-person narration describes Ethan as follows: “He’s pale, really pale. Like never-seen-the-daylight-cos-I’m-actually-a-vampire pale” (Clarke 2011: 2). The truth is revealed slowly: Ethan is not a vampire, but rather part of a dream Grace is having while in a coma after attempting suicide. Similarly, in Lauren Kate's *The Betrayal of Natalie Hargrove* (2009), the first chapter hints at the psychic powers of girls in the “junior class” (Kate 2011: 7). This proves to be a canny intertextual joke: *The Betrayal of Natalie Hargrove* (though not marketed as such) is a loose retelling of *Macbeth*, with a high school prom queen as Thane of Cawdor. The juniors are not psychic, but the reference to their rumored abilities is a reference to Shakespeare's weird sisters.

If *Entangled* and *The Betrayal of Natalie Hargrove* do not share the dark romance convention of including supernatural beings, they do include other key generic tropes. Perhaps most importantly, both feature teenaged female protagonists, and both feature girls who attempt (successfully, in Natalie's case) suicide. Focus on the adolescent female is fairly consistent throughout the genre, though some texts, such as Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl's *Beautiful Creatures* (2009) and Brenna Yovanoff's *The Replacement* (2010), do feature male narrators. Moreover, as the references to suicide reveal, these texts share a fascination with the (dead) female body in a way that reveals a deep connection to, and development of, Gothic traditions. As Catherine Spooner in this regard has argued, “Contemporary Gothic is more obsessed with bodies than in any of its previous phases: bodies become spectacle, provoking disgust, modified, reconstructed and artificially augmented” (Spooner 2006: 63).

PRETTY DEAD GIRLS

If YA dark romance is populated by an array of supernatural beings, up to and including unicorns, it is also saturated by death. The texts that feature vampires are, of course, peopled with the “devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful” walking dead, but elsewhere we find less poetic representations. In Lisa McMann's *The Missing* (2011), for instance, the heroine is confronted by the ghosts of abused and murdered children; in the early House of Night series by P.C. and Kristin Cast (2007–13), “dead” teen vampires are reanimated as grotesque zombie-like creatures. Parents die,

frequently, in these books. Many narratives begin with a heroine being forced to leave her home to live somewhere else, and losing a parent (or two) is a common reason for her move. Gruesome and visceral murders occur as a matter of course, as in Mia James's *By Midnight* (2010), where the heroine finds her father in his study with his neck torn open.

In addition to the representations of death outlined above, another generic convention emerges. In many of these fictions, the heroine herself dies – symbolically or literally – and may even die on multiple occasions. It is almost to be expected that YA fiction will represent feminine death, given that its most famous heroine, Meyer's Bella Swan, devotes time and energy to cajoling and persuading her lover to kill her in order for her to be resurrected as a vampire. And yet, to reduce representations of feminine death in YA fiction and film to a desire to be made into a vampire (with all its concomitant sexual allure) actually masks the prevalence of dead heroines in the genre. Not all heroines want to die, of course, and not all dead girls inevitably return as vampires, though most *do* return in some form or other.

Symbolic death is a common trope in YA fiction, and is presented in numerous ways. One textual mode of representing a symbolic death is the removal of the heroine's ability to narrate her own story. In Melissa Marr's *Ink Exchange* (2008), Leslie falls under the spell of the fairy king, Irial, after getting a tattoo that contains his blood mixed with ink. After taking the fairy's mark, Leslie becomes addicted to the flow of emotions that connects her to Irial, and her mental and physical health deteriorate; she falls into a drug-like stupor, and the novel's narration becomes fragmented and distorted, with portions presented in italics, contrasting with the non-italic plot that goes on around the immobile heroine (Marr 2008: 267–73). Stephenie Meyer uses a similar, if more dramatic, technique at two points in the *Twilight* series. In *New Moon*, after Edward abandons Bella, she falls into a state of depression. Her narration at this point ceases, and the book simply offers pages that are blank save for the names of the months that pass during this symbolic death (Meyer 2007b: 75–82). In the fourth book of the series, *Breaking Dawn*, Bella's story ends when her pregnancy (she is carrying a half-human, half-vampire fetus that is threatening to tear her body to pieces) causes her to become seriously ill. Again, Bella's narration is halted, and the story begins to be narrated by the werewolf Jacob Black.

The film adaptations of Meyer's novels remove these moments of symbolic death by clearly showing that Bella is alive – if somewhat incapacitated – at these points in the story. Nevertheless, cinematic representations of Bella intensify other moments of symbolic death that are hinted at in the novels. Toward the end of *New Moon* (Weitz 2009), Bella (Kristen Stewart) dives from a cliff. As she enters the water, she sees a vampire who is trying to kill her and hits her head on a rock. Unconscious, Bella floats through the water and the viewer witnesses a life-flashing-before-her-eyes montage, followed by a white-faced and peaceful Bella submerged beneath the water, clearly not breathing. Later in the series, there is a second depiction of Bella as a corpse, which is briefer but more explicitly a death scene. Shortly before her wedding to Edward in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1* (Condon 2011), Bella has a short vision of herself lying in a coffin. This vision relates to others that appear sporadically in the film series, specifically Bella's dream of herself as her own aged grandmother in *New Moon*, and the pile of corpses that forms her “dream” wedding cake in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*.

The most striking and sustained vision of Bella as a corpse is also to be found in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*. Bella's pregnancy leads to her physical decline; as noted, this is signaled in the novel by the silencing of Bella's narration. In the film, however, a more visceral translation is enacted. On returning from her honeymoon, Bella becomes more and more death-like. Her limbs become skeletal – enhanced by her grotesquely and prematurely swollen belly; her face becomes pallid and almost grey in hue – enhanced by its contrast with the white faces of the Cullen family. This escalates to the point at which she collapses in the pains of labor, loses consciousness, undergoes what might be termed a “dental caesarian” (Edward tears the baby from her womb with his teeth), and, finally and literally, dies. The reactions of Edward (Robert Pattinson) and Jacob (Taylor Lautner) reveal that Bella is dead, and Edward begins the process of attempting to resurrect her as a vampire, fearing that it is too late. Here, symbolic death becomes literal death, imbued with references to abject female sexuality: the camera pans back to reveal Bella's fragile and skeletal body on a table, covered by a sheet stained with the blood of her ruptured womb.

And yet, for many viewers, this is the moment that was most anticipated and relished in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*. Indeed, while the consummation of Bella and Edward's sexual relationship occupies less than a minute of screen time, the degeneration of Bella into a corpse takes over an hour. In reference to the handling of Bella's death in the novel, Danielle Dick McGeough argues that “Unlike the vague and often absent descriptions of Bella's sexual body, Bella's dying body is described in vivid detail” (McGeough 2010: 96). The film adaptation augments this “vivid detail.” With its coating of uterine blood and protruding bones, Bella's dead body is “abjectified” – rendered an object of abject horror – by the end of the film. Edward's first response is to plunge a syringe of his “venom” into the dead girl's heart, but he then begins to administer small, tender bites to her arms and legs. The long-awaited, eroticized kiss of the vampire is delivered to a corpse on a hospital table in a moment that is at once poignant and morbid.

But this is not the end of Bella's narrative: viewers are aware that they are watching “Part 1,” as readers of the book, at the equivalent point in the narrative, will note that they have over 350 pages remaining. Jacob and Edward mourn the girl's death, and the Quileute werewolf pack threatens retribution, but Bella's dead body has been filled with Edward's venom, and it begins to metamorphose once again. The final pre-credit shot of the film shows Bella's eyes snapping open to reveal red irises; this color is not symbolic of simple vampirism in the film, but symbolic of *power*, as the color has, to this point, only been seen in the eyes of the powerful and ancient Volturi.

The literal death of Bella in *Breaking Dawn* (novel and film) is a dramatic and extended version of a trope that is found elsewhere in YA paranormal romance: the heroine often has to die if a satisfactory level of narrative resolution is to be achieved. At the end of Becca Fitzpatrick's *Hush, Hush* (2009), for instance, the heroine Nora throws herself from a rafter in order to defeat a fallen angel's human vassal and allow her lover to become human. As she falls, she narrates her death: “A spiral-like liquid formed inside me, coiling deeper and deeper. I felt myself pulled into the current. I was sliding down through myself, into a dark place” (Fitzpatrick 2009: 381). The glimpse of death we have from Nora's narration signals a dissolution of the self: she is aware of something “inside” her, but also that she is “sliding down through” herself, and

this is underlined by references to liquidity and darkness. However, the narrative negates this potential dissolution by bringing Nora back from the dead with no adverse consequences or trauma. Nora's condition proves to be temporary, and she is resurrected by Patch (her fallen angel lover). This removes Nora's doubts about the relationship, allows Patch to be elevated to the status of guardian angel, and begins Nora's quest to discover her own powers. It is also not the end of the narrative, as Nora's resurrection sets in motion the events of *Hush*, *Hush*'s three sequels.

It is, perhaps, this that is contemporary YA Gothic's clearest idiosyncrasy – and a notable rejection of a central narrative of its generic elder sister, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: heroines die (sometimes in grotesque or violent ways), but this is easily overcome and seldom cause for great concern. The adolescent heroine's death is normalized to an extent that is almost absurd. In Kim Harrison's short story "Madison Avery and the Dim Reaper" (2009), the heroine dies in the first chapter. Like Nora, Madison narrates her own death: "It was quiet. Breathing hurt. Oh God, I hurt all over, and I stared at the shattered windshield as I panted. . . . My insides hurt. I didn't see blood, but I think I broke something inside. *I was alive?*" (Harrison 2009: 116). Madison's final question/statement reveals the strangeness of her situation: due to power games and bureaucratic mix-ups amongst the "reapers," she exists in a state of limbo. She becomes something both dead and alive, a ghost yet not a ghost, corporeal but "Misty and thin" (Harrison 2009: 127). After the car accident, she wakes up, covered in what she thinks is a rubber sheet: "I was in a hospital, but . . . *Wait a minute. I was in a freaking body bag?*" (Harrison 2009: 122). The use of question marks after "*I was alive?*" and "*I was in a freaking body bag?*" emphasizes the heroine's confusion, but also encourages the reader (somewhat unsubtly) to question the (im)possibility of her situation. Madison returns home to her father, and he attempts to comfort her: "'Shhhh.' He pulled me back into a hug, rocking me, but I only cried harder. 'It's okay. You're all right,' he soothed, his hand brushing my hair. But he didn't know I was really dead" (Harrison 2009: 134). The image of a father rocking his 17-year-old daughter as though she were an infant, unaware of the fact that she is in fact a corpse, is loaded with the ambiguity of adolescence, mourning and death. However, Madison's reactions to her own demise are mixed. As she steals the amulet of the mysterious creature that killed her, discovers that she might now have power to defeat him, meets a messenger from Heaven (named Ron) and acquires her own guardian angel, she concludes that "maybe [death] wasn't going to be so bad after all" (Harrison 2009: 157). In many ways, the death of the heroine in Harrison's story is more unsettling than the death of Bella in *Breaking Dawn*. Bella's death and its anticipation are, after all, accompanied by social conventions of fear, mourning and pain. Madison's death, on the other hand, is depicted in a much more light-hearted way. If anything, it is presented as *ordinary*. After coming to terms with her predicament, she weighs up what to do next: "Go to school. Do my homework. Be with my dad" (Harrison 2009: 155). Death – the ultimate disintegration of human identity – is refigured as an inconvenience simply requiring accommodation into one's lifestyle.

TEXTUAL CANNIBALISM

YA dark romance's fascination with, and neutralization of, the heroine's death places the genre in a strange relationship with other Gothic modes. While the aesthetization

of the dead female body is apparent throughout, the resurrected heroine's refusal to grieve for (or even worry about) her own death is unusual, and goes far beyond "the deferral of bodily presence" that is "intrinsic to the functioning of Gothic narrative" (Spooner 2004: 6). To understand this further, one must consider these texts' often uneasy relationship to Gothic as a category, and the ways in which they situate themselves within different generic contexts.

Significantly, none of the texts under examination here is explicitly marketed as a Gothic fiction. Moreover, unlike *Buffy* or Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, the earlier books of which reference and anticipate many of the concerns of Goth style and culture, recent YA fictions have more often sought to distance themselves from Goth subculture. Characters frequently refer to "freaky Goth kids who didn't like to bathe much" (Cast and Cast 2009: 6) or a "Goth kid" with a "narrow chest heaving under a Black Sabbath T-shirt" and "strings of hair" (St Crow 2009: 16). Only Caine's *Morganville Vampires* series features a Goth central character, serving as an exception to an otherwise rigid rule (see Priest 2012). Additionally, while teen films visually reference tropes of Gothic literature, particularly the pathetic fallacy, color symbolism and fetishized bodies, there are also significant attempts to distance themselves from the genre.

Perhaps the clearest (while simultaneously the most ambiguous) denial of the Gothic can be found in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*, in which the tropes drawn on in previous installments are directly and indirectly rejected. After their wedding, Edward and Bella travel to Isle Esme for their honeymoon. Bella realizes that this will result in their having sex for the first time. There follows a brief, and rather comedic, sequence of Bella getting ready for sex – brushing her teeth, hurriedly shaving her legs, fluffing her hair – that is decidedly *not Gothic* in effect. This short scene is, instead, a familiar one from romantic comedies and "chick flicks." After Edward and Bella have sex, and Edward refuses to do it again, viewers are treated to an extended sequence that also evokes the generic conventions of the "rom-com." Bella, clad in lingerie, attempts to seduce Edward by posing provocatively against a doorframe. This uncharacteristic move is awkward and staged, causing Edward to burst out laughing (the first time he has done so in the entire series) and bury his head in a pillow. We notice then that Edward's face has a more natural hue, that his hair is less stylized, and that he is wearing a grey T-shirt and boxer shorts. Bella and Edward then play chess, with Bella wearing shorts and a vest-top, and Edward a light-colored shirt, and their game is intercut with comic vignettes of Bella's pursuit of Edward and his employment of supernatural speed to evade her. The film cuts back to the chess game, and Bella defeats Edward: they kiss. The entire sequence is accompanied by "From Now On," an upbeat rock song by The Features.

These scenes ought to be contextualized in order fully to understand the generic interplay at work in them. Bella's "chick flick" moment on Isle Esme follows her wedding, which began with a nightmare in which she and Edward became stained with blood at the altar, before the apparently dead bodies of her guests contorted to form a blood-stained wedding cake, atop which perched Bella and her groom. While the happy and playful scenes of the couple's honeymoon seem to be an antidote to both Bella's nightmare and the detached and sober actuality of the wedding, the Isle Esme "rom-com" is abruptly shattered by Bella waking up, revealing that – as a repeated refrain of the indie rock soundtrack had told us – it was "only a dream."

Bella now lies in bed, facing away from a characteristically white-faced and aloof Edward, and cries. Edward lays a hand on her shoulder to comfort her, and his heavy wedding band seems conspicuous and almost over-sized. Bella might dream she is in a romantic comedy, but when she wakes up she is back in the nightmarish over-symbolism of her Gothic marriage.

These scenes demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between contemporary teen vampire romances and Gothic traditions. “Gothic-ness” in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1* is presented not only as dangerous and oppressive, but also ludicrous and camp, reminding us of the “freaky Goth kids” of YA novels. This is the first film in the Twilight series not primarily to use scrolling white-on-black end-credits, replacing them instead with bold screens of a single color (black, white and red) with actors’ names in block capitals in a contrasting color. An additional scene in the end-credits serves further to undermine the aesthetic of the previous films. In a scene intended to set up the events of *Breaking Dawn: Part 2* (Condon 2012), the Volturi vampires read a message about the Cullen family. Where previously the Volturi have been presented as powerful and dangerous, they now descend into near-parody. Aro (Michael Sheen) flippantly orders the death of a messenger because she has misspelled “Carlisle,” and Marcus (Christopher Heyerdahl) drawls his lines in the style of Bobby Pickett’s *Monster Mash*. Aro’s final line, “they have something I want,” is archly performed directly to the camera, and what once seemed like decadent refinement of costume now appears as camp archaism. Ironically, however, this tongue-in-cheek undermining of a “serious” aesthetic is the only moment in the film series so far that has consciously referenced the “gloriously camp theatricality” (Spooner 2006: 27) of previous iterations of the Gothic. Thus, the in-credits scene of *Breaking Dawn: Part 1* is at once a rejection of, and a nod to, older traditions, revealing that, as Spooner claims of the Gothic tradition in general, contemporary teen Gothic “has a greater degree of self-consciousness about its nature, cannibalistically consuming the dead body of its own tradition” (Spooner 2006: 10).

This cannibalism extends well beyond Twilight’s “own tradition”; in the novels, it includes intertextual relationships with other literary texts (Byron 2008; Fällér 2011), but this also constitutes a form of auto-cannibalism, with the Twilight franchise utilizing cross-media self-referentiality in its “canonical” texts, its promotion and its fan responses (Aubrey, Walus and Click 2010). We might read this as an example of what Henry Jenkins calls “convergence culture,” as “Younger consumers have become informational hunters and gatherers, taking pleasure in tracking down character backgrounds and plot points and making connections between different texts within the same franchise” (Jenkins 2006: 133). A clear example of this “hunter-gatherer” pleasure can be seen in the representation of Alice Cullen. Viewers learn little about Alice’s background; if they then read the books, they discover she remembers nothing about her pre-vampire human existence; in order to discover more, they might then read one of the fan or wiki sites; this then points them to *The Official Illustrated Guide* (Meyer 2011), which gives Alice’s full backstory. A cynical reader might argue that this is a way of manipulating consumers into buying more products, of promoting the sense that enjoyment cannot be complete with only one purchase. Indeed, as Jenkins notes, “there are strong economic motives behind transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2006: 106). A reader familiar with the history of Gothic texts, however, might see this more as a continuity with tradition: like the

cross-media interplay found in *Buffy*, the *Twilight* series' utilization of multiple platforms is "arguably only a more accelerated version of the theatrical adaptations and semi-plagiarised fictions that surrounded the Gothic novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Spooner 2007: 2).

If we widen a consideration to include YA paranormal romance and film more generally, textual cannibalism also takes on another function: the ways in which later fiction and film reference the *Twilight* franchise establish Meyer's work as the *locus classicus* of contemporary teen Gothic. While some of these references are overt – such as when the heroine of *Entangled* (2011) reminds herself that "my life isn't actually *Twilight*" (Clarke 2011: 4) – many rely on "in-jokes," which only a reader/viewer with knowledge of the franchise will understand. For instance, in *By Midnight* (2010), April finds herself attracted to a sexy vampire. In order to make herself more attractive to him, a friend advises her to visualize herself with the most desirable man she can think of. April chooses "Robert Pattinson" (James 2010: 167). Elsewhere in the genre, we find less clear endorsements, which nevertheless still rely on a knowledge of Meyer's series. The heroine of Caine's Morganville Vampires series, Claire Danvers, is presented as a different type of heroine to Meyer's Bella Swan. She is not attracted to vampires, wishes to study science at university, learns how to fight and defend herself, and has a fond attachment to her stake that is far more *Buffy* than Bella. Claire does not overtly reject Bella as a model, but rather rejects *Wuthering Heights* (famously Bella's favorite book) and the notion that it might be an aspirational model: "It wasn't as if the Brontë sisters were going to make a difference in her daily life, right?" (Caine 2010: 78). The blurb on the back of the UK editions of the Morganville series supports this, claiming that these are the books for readers who want to "dump Meyer's vapid vampires" (Caine 2010: back cover). However, this, along with Claire's comment on Bella's favorite book, still serves to preserve the status of Meyer's work within the genre, reifying Meyer's vampires as a model against which all others will be measured.

In film, self-referential intertextuality has a more uncanny quality, as the casting of post-*Twilight* films often results in faces and characters acquiring a peculiar mix of the familiar and unfamiliar. Thus, Billy Burke, who plays Charlie Swan in the *Twilight* films, returns as the lycanthropic father in the 2011 film *Red Riding Hood*, directed by Catherine Hardwicke, who also directed *Twilight*, and Bella Swan's doppelgänger appears in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders 2012). In this retelling of *Snow White*, the heroine "dies" when she takes a bite of a poisoned apple, allowing for a complex moment of visual intertextuality. In the film, we see Kristen Stewart's *Snow White*-corpse lying on snow: her beautiful and peaceful death visually references the first two symbolic deaths of Bella Swan discussed above, with her spread-out hair reminiscent of Bella underwater in *New Moon*. Her hand half-points toward a red apple with a bite taken out of it. It does not require a huge imaginative leap in order to connect this apple to the one on the front cover of *Twilight*, an image which is visually referenced in both (the film) *Twilight* and *Breaking Dawn: Part 1* and which, in turn, is a reference to the "forbidden fruit" of Genesis. In terms of narrative, *Snow White*'s death serves a similar purpose to Bella's. It is anticipated and desired, as it is the route to the satisfactory resolution of the heroine's trajectory. Watching *Snow White and the Huntsman* gives the viewer a feeling of *déjà vu* as they once again wish for the aestheticized death of Kristen Stewart, surrounded by apples and snow.

CONCLUSION

As the intertextual mechanisms at play in contemporary YA fiction and film indicate, reading teen Gothic narratives requires an awareness of transmedia storytelling. The *Twilight* franchise is a difficult text to read, largely because it is impossible to approach it from a single disciplinary perspective. There is also much work to be done on contextualizing recent YA paranormal romance within a wider study of popular culture aimed at young adults. Its relationship to the contemporaneous popularity of revisited and rebooted superhero franchises – particularly the *Batman* film series, which has frequently employed Gothic tropes, transmedia intertextuality and generic hybridity (Brooker 2012) – is particularly deserving of further critical attention.

However, both popular media and academic discourse have proved resistant, thus far, to undertaking such a project: reactions to the *Twilight* series have been marked by anti-fandom and critical (gendered) dismissal of both the books' fans and their author. The YA books and films that have followed Meyer's series have, as yet, attracted little scholarly attention. Nevertheless, we might also read a more positive connection between the teen consumer of YA fiction and film and the Gothic tradition. As with earlier cultural productions, paranormal romance reveals a canniness and a transmedia intertextuality that is fully engaged with by much of its audience. This allows us to resituate the genre's readers, shifting from a focus on youth, gender and lack of comprehension to something more akin to Jenkins's "informational hunters and gatherers." The encouragement of such a strategy by the texts themselves, coupled with the centrality of female protagonists and the permeation of sex, death and the supernatural, undoubtedly suggests that we should read the emergence of YA paranormal romance as a key moment in the abiding (and complex) relationship between young women and Gothic fictions.

REFERENCES

- Aubrey, J.S., Walus, S. and Click, M.A. (2010) "Twilight and the Production of the Twenty-First-Century Teen Idol," in M.A. Click, J.S. Aubrey, and E. Behm-Morawitz, (eds) *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, and the Vampire Franchise*, New York: Peter Lang, 225–42.
- Brashares, A. (2010) *My Name is Memory*, London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Brooker, W. (2012) *Hunting the Dark Knight: Twenty-First-Century Batman*, London: I.B. Tauris.
- Byron, G. (2008) "'As One Dead': *Romeo and Juliet* in the 'Twilight' Zone," in J. Drakakis and D. Townshend (eds) *Gothic Shakespeares*, Abingdon: Routledge, 167–85.
- Cast, P.C. and Cast, K. (2009) *Marked*, 2007, London: Atom.
- Caine, R. (2010) *Glass Houses*. 2006, London: Allison and Busby.
- Clarke, C. (2011) *Entangled*, London: Quercus.
- Fäller, K. (2011) "'And It's All There!' – Intertextual Structures, Themes, and Characters in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series," thesis, Munich: Grin Verlag, Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/182779/and-it-s-all-there-intertextual-structures-themes-and-characters>> (accessed November 12, 2012).
- Fitzpatrick, B. (2009) *Hush, Hush*, London: Simon and Schuster.

- Harrison, K. (2009) "Madison Avery and the Dim Reaper," in *Prom Nights From Hell*, London: Harper Collins, 95–158.
- James, M. (2010) *By Midnight*, London: Gollanz.
- Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture*, New York: New York University Press.
- Kate, L. (2011) *The Betrayal of Natalie Hargrove*, 2009, London: Corgi Books.
- Marr, M. (2008) *Ink Exchange*, London: HarperCollins.
- McGeough, D.D (2010) "Twilight and the Transformation of Flesh: Reading the Body in Contemporary Youth Culture," in M.A. Click, J.S. Aubrey, and E. Behm-Morawitz, (eds) *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, and the Vampire Franchise*, New York: Peter Lang, 87–102.
- Meyer, S. (2007a) *Twilight*, 2005, London: Atom.
- (2007b) *New Moon*, 2006, London: Atom.
- (2010) *Breaking Dawn*, 2008, London: Atom.
- (2011) *The Twilight Saga: The Official Illustrated Guide*. London: Atom.
- Priest, H. (2012) "'Hell! Was I Becoming a Vampyre Slut?': Sex, Sexuality and Morality in Young Adult Vampire Fiction," in D. Mutch (ed.) *The Modern Vampire and Human Identity*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 55–75.
- Richards, C. (2008) *Forever Young: Essays on Young Adult Fictions*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Spooner, C. (2004) *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (2006) *Contemporary Gothic*, London: Reaktion Books.
- (2007) "Introduction: Gothic in Contemporary Popular Culture," *Gothic Studies*, 9.1: 1–4.
- St. Crow, L. (2009) *Strange Angels*, London: Quercus.
- Waller, A. (2009) *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism*, New York: Routledge.
- Wood, F. and Stone, P. (2011) "Genre Focus: Teenage Kicks", *The Bookseller*, July 22. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.thebookseller.com/feature/genre-focus-teenage-kicks.html>> (accessed 18 August 2012).

FURTHER READING

- Anatol. G.L. (ed.) (2011) *Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Essay collection exploring Meyer's fiction from a number of theoretical perspectives. Offers some consideration of the transmedia nature of the wider franchise, and reveals a concern with exploring the Twilight "phenomenon" and its cultural worth.)
- James, K. (2009) *Death, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Adolescent Literature*, New York: Routledge. (Explores presentations and intersections of sex and death in fictions aimed primarily at teenagers. Engages with supernatural/paranormal fiction, although this is not the main focus.)
- Priest, H. (2010) "Fairy Lovers and the Threat of Permanence," in E. Nelson, H. Priest, and J. Burcar (eds) *Creating Humanity, Discovering Monstrosity: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, Oxford: Inter-disciplinary Press [eBook]. (Essay exploring representations and implications of sexuality, death and addiction in YA fairy romances.)
- Wilson, N. (ed.) (2011) *Seduced by Twilight: The Allure and Contradictory Messages of the Popular Saga*, Jefferson NC: McFarland. (A collection of essays exploring the Twilight franchise from multi-disciplinary perspectives. Reveals a concern with the cultural validity and originality of Meyer's work.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE EARLIEST PARODIES OF GOTHIC LITERATURE



Douglass H. Thomson

'Tis said the sublime sometimes borders on the ridiculous.

Sarah Green, "Literary Retrospection," *Romance Readers and
Romance Writers* (2010: vii)

In a letter dated March 15, 1799, Charles Lamb expressed approval of his friend Robert Southey's ballad "The Old Woman of Berkeley" (1799), a poem which draws upon the thirteenth/fourteenth-century Latin chronicle of English history, *Flores Historiarum* and its legend of fiends carrying off to hell the reanimated corpse of an old witch:

The Old Woman of Berkeley comes next [in the order of his preference]; in some humors I would give it preference above any . . . But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert, with so little alteration, his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen.

(Lamb 1935: 2.151)

Southey, however, did not intend for the "The Old Woman of Berkeley" to be read as "comic." In writing to his friend William Taylor, who considered "The Old Woman of Berkeley" as "unquestionably the best original English ballad extant" (Robberds 1843: 2.106), Southey claimed his poem "is the ballad of a ballad-maker, believing the whole superstition, and thereby making even the grotesque terrible" (Robberds 1843: 2.112). To underscore the seriousness of the ballad, Southey followed it in his *Poems* (1799) with a parody of the original entitled "The Surgeon's Warning." But this ballad only created further confusion. Lamb found the opening lines of the parody, "The doctor whisper'd the nurse, / And the surgeon knew what he said," to be the "finest death-bed image I ever met with" (Lamb 1935: 2.151). Lamb thus read Southey's attempt at an authentic terror ballad as comic and found in his parody a chilling intimation of death. One notes a degree of chagrin in Southey's retrospect on his early efforts at Gothic ballad-making: "In general these

Beelzebub stories acquire a mixture of the ludicrous with the terrific, which it is difficult, if possible, to avoid” (Robberds 1843: 1.326).

Southey’s difficulty underscores the problems inherent in addressing Gothic parody as a subject of study. First, one encounters something familiar to readers of such “First Gothic” writers as Walpole, Beckford, Lewis and even Radcliffe: parody and what Sue Zlosnik and Avril Horner (2005) define as the “comic turn” frequently surface in these writers of Gothic novels. Then one finds in works clearly presenting themselves as parodies, or more narrowly, as burlesques of Gothic literature, a “serious” evocation of the literature of terror that these works intend to satirize. For example, Alison Milbank in her survey of “Satires” from the Sadleir-Black collection of Gothic literature claims that “Arguably the only work in this section that truly avoids Gothic contamination is Thomas Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey*” (Milbank 2004). Given the generic fluidity of the subject, this survey of Gothic parody will limit itself to lesser-known works of fiction, drama, and poetry from 1788–1818, texts that clearly identify themselves as satiric treatments of the literature of terror. These works express a wide variety of perspectives on their alleged target, ranging from travesty to tribute and from brutal mockery to bemused playfulness. Many, but not all, exhibit the kind of “double-coding” (“installing and ironizing”) that Linda Hutcheon (1989: 93) and other theorists (Dentith 2000; Bogel 2001) of parody have defined as a key feature of this satiric genre. A brief critical study of these parodies reveals the always double-edged story of contemporary fascination with Gothic literature: both the desire to capitalize upon its great popularity (see Figure 25.1) and the effort to police and debunk its sensationalism.

TRAVESTY vs HOMAGE: DARK AND LIGHT BURLESQUES OF THE GOTHIC

“On horror’s head, horrors accumulate”: this epigram to “Grim, King of Ghosts,” from the anonymously published anthology, *Tales of Terror* (1801), cites a passage from *Othello* (3.3.370) in order to describe one of the more visceral forms of Gothic parody: travesty. Unleavened by humor or irony, these works amplify Gothic horror with an aim to appall the reader and to indicate what their writers perceived as the depravity of such literary taste. Henry William Bunbury’s “The Little Grey Man” provides a disturbing example of such a travesty. This ballad from M.G. Lewis’s *Tales of Wonder* (1801) features an infernal Little Grey Man who, without any kind of motive, causes the senseless and graphic death of two lovers during the Wars of the Austrian Succession, a stark setting that stands in opposition to the more Romantic martyr-ground of the Crusades. The gruesome detail includes the nasty homunculus tearing off balms and bandages placed on the wounded hero before he awakens from a nightmare mistakenly to stab his beloved to death. Anna Seward, a writer with her own interest in the ballad revival, claimed that “The course of the tale is so distorted from nature, and probability, is so totally devoid of sentiment or moral,” so much so that it led her to believe Bunbury wrote it “in ridicule of German stories and the prevailing taste for supernatural horrors” (quoted in Ruff 1930: 41). “The Wolf-King or Little Red-Riding-Hood” from *Tales of Terror* (1801) provides a gruesome reworking of its fairy-tale material while also aiming a barb at M.G. Lewis’s element-king ballads. The wolf’s killing of

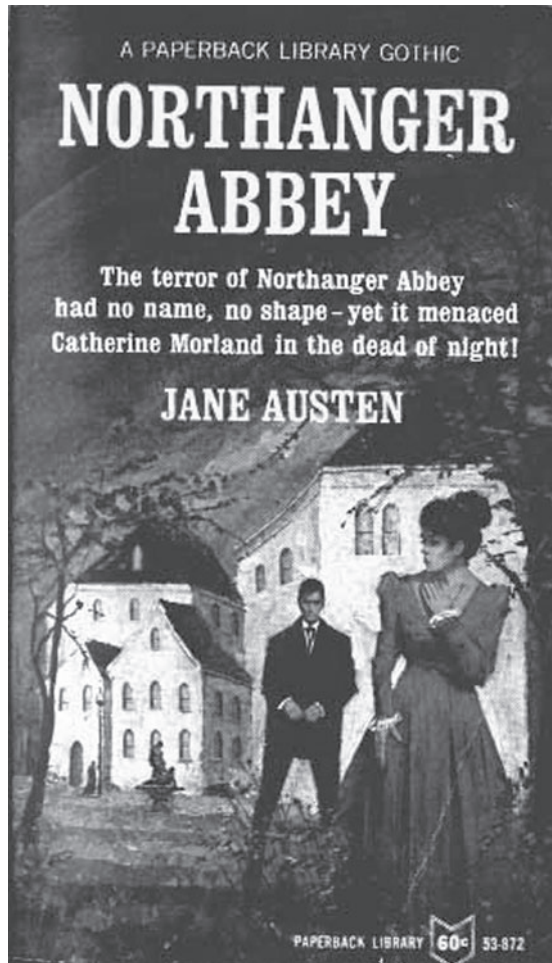


Figure 25.1 The cover illustration of a Paperback Library Gothic edition of *Northanger Abbey* from 1965

“poor grand-mummie” and its accompanying illustration (see Figure 25.2) are particularly striking examples:

He dash’d her brains out on the stones,
He gnaw’d her sinews, crack’d her bones;
He munch’d her heart, he quaff’d her gore,
And up her lights and liver tore!!!

(Anon. 2009b: 253)

Immediately after this, Little Red gets similarly eviscerated. Another example of travesty can be found in R.S.’s *The New Monk* (1798), especially in its close parody of Lewis’s famed Bleeding Nun episode from *The Monk* (1796). In place of



Figure 25.2 Henry William Bunbury. Illustration for “The Wolf-King or Little Red-Riding-Hood,” *Tales of Terror* (London: Bulmer and J. Bell, 1801)

the nun we have the “Bleeding Doctor,” who has his “entrails, heart, and life” torn from him, and then a “busy” black cat eats “him to the spinal marrow” (R.S. 2007: 97). A statement on the back cover to Elizabeth Andrews’s Valancourt edition of this sustained burlesque pinpoints the irony inherent in such travesties of the Gothic, claiming the novel “descends to a level even more grotesque and shocking than *The Monk*” (R.S. 2007). In their attacks on Gothic literature, these travesties actually end up providing more graphic gore than their source material.

Other burlesques of the Gothic take a much more light-hearted approach to their subject. Horace Smith’s “Fire and Ale. By M.G.L.” from *Rejected Addresses, Or The New Theatrum Poetarum* (1812) playfully parodies the “element-king” ballads in Lewis’s *Tales of Wonder*. To commemorate the rebuilding of Drury Lane theatre, which had burned to the ground in 1809, the new owners commissioned a laudatory poem for the occasion, and Smith’s collection of parodies, co-authored with his brother James, uses the fiction that their volume gathers together, the “rejected addresses” of contemporary poets who participated in the competition. Smith’s take on Lewis’s ballads features a comically realized Fire King who seizes as his bride the first Drury Lane, causing, of course, its immolation:

From his nostrils a lava sulphureous flows,
Which scorches wherever it lingers;
A sniveling fellow he’s call’d by his foes,

For he can't raise his paw up to blow his red nose,
For fear it should blister his fingers.

(Smith 2000: 2.72)

A decidedly mock-heroic Ale King, armed with spigot and bung, prevents the Fire King from returning for the second Miss Drury, warning that he'll have the "ignipotent knight" indicted for "bigamy" (Smith 2000: 2.73). Francis Jeffrey praised the poem in terms that acknowledge both its cleverness and the poetic merits of its target, Lewis's original, claiming that "Fire and Ale" exhibits

not only a faithful copy of the spirited, loose, and flowing versification of that singular author, but a very just representation of that mixture of extravagance and jocularity which has impressed most of his writings with the character of a sort of farcical horror.

(Jeffrey 1812: 445)

Several other humorous parodies of Lewis's ballads appeared in the early nineteenth century, among them Charlotte Dacre's "Grimalkin's Ghost; Or, The Water Spirits" (*"In humble imitation of the soaring flights of some legendary and exquisitely pathetic modern Bards"*) (1805), which features a villain haunted by "five spectre kittens" (Dacre 1805: 62).

The anonymous compilers of *Tales of Terror*, a volume often regarded simply as a burlesque of Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, also seemed to understand this mix of "extravagance and jocularity." One of the volume's burlesques, "Grim, King of the Ghosts," contains the following head-note: "This Tale, as will be immediately seen by all tale-readers, is written in imitation of the Cloud-King, and dedicated (of course) to M.G. Lewis, Esq." (Anon. 2009a: 260). As Lewis's "Cloud-King" contains its own touches of self-parody, "Grim" appears to be less an attack on Lewis than a homage to him, a carrying-on of the good fun that Lewis had with his own ballad (the "of course" added parenthetically implies a knowing and self-selecting audience, one that appreciates Lewis's joke). Ending with the outrageous "The Mud-King" and its surfeit of mock-pedantic notes and allusions to Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* (1728–29), the mix of comic and serious ballads in *Tales of Terror* actually carries on the procedure of *Tales of Wonder*, a collection which contains its own fair share of outright burlesques. Especially noteworthy on this score is Lewis's "Giles Jollup the Grave, and Brown Sally Green" (first appearing in the fourth edition of *The Monk*, 1798), a self-proclaimed "Parody" of his most famous Gothic ballad, "Alonzo the Brave, and Fair Imogene." To complicate matters even more, Lewis admits in a head-note that he is indebted to "a parody which appeared in one of the news-papers" for the burlesque strategy of "making an apothecary of the knight, and a brewer of the baron" and for several borrowed lines, which he prints in italics (Lewis 2009a: 65). As opposed to what Michael Gamer has described as the "monotonous," even "ritualistic abuse" waged by hostile reviewers against Gothic and "German-mad" literature in the later 1790s (Gamer 2000: 42), Lewis and his followers take a more bemused approach to what they understood, better than others, to be its excesses.

A work of fiction that shares this comic treatment of the Gothic is *Love and Horror* (1812), written under the pen name Ircastrensis. Like other burlesques in

this chapter, the novel employs the strategy of treating a lofty subject in low terms. The hero, Thomas Bailey, a butcher's son, has fallen in obviously unrequited love with the portrait of a woman who died 200 years ago. Her descendant, Annabella Tit, a greengrocer's daughter, provides a suitable replacement for Tom's reveries, and the novel subjects the two lovers to a series of hilarious persecutions. Tom is harassed by a mysterious Armenia merchant (a parody of the villain in Schiller's *The Ghost-Seer*) who pops in frequently from ubiquitous trap doors and has Tom battered by robbers, denounced by a secret tribunal, encased in glass, hanged for a crime he did not commit and mistaken for a merman. Annabella plays the role of the long-suffering, exquisitely sensitive, musically gifted Radcliffean heroine, but Ircastrensis tests the limits of sensibility when she befriends a talking frog, Peter Pholy, and resorts to a disguise as a dog. The narrator is somewhat of a prankster, often interrupting to underscore and apologize for the improbabilities of his story, but all ends well in this good-natured romp, as Thomas and Annabella are rescued from an auto-da-fé and married at the end. The novel delivers on its coy claim in the Preface to "have somewhat gone beyond the efforts of former writers" (Ircastrensis 2008: 3) and does so with a genuine comic relish. The light-hearted burlesques in this section stand in opposition to the travesties in that they nimbly underscore the comic potential of their source material through imitation and exaggeration.

GOTHIC MELODRAMA

Exaggeration obviously plays a seminal role in melodrama, and, when it came to the use of Gothic stage effects, dramatists worked constantly to outdo one another. On February 18, 1811, Covent Garden staged a revival of George Colman the Younger's melodrama *Blue-Beard; Or, Female Curiosity* (first staged in 1798). This "after-piece," so called because this two-act play appeared after the staging of the main dramatic work, featured a characteristically sensational plot, the story of a Turkish tyrant, Abomelique, who murders his wives if they fail to restrain their curiosity, and even stagier sets. One, reportedly costing £2,000, functioned spectacularly as the Blue-Chamber, the place that Blue-Beard's wives were forbidden to enter. There can be little doubt of the set's Gothic pedigree:

Shacabac puts the key into the lock; the Door instantly sinks, with a tremendous crash: and the Blue Chamber appears streaked with vivid streams of Blood . . . Abomelique is represented in the action of beheading the Beauty he was, before, supplicating. – The Pictures, and Devices, of Love, change to subjects of Horror and Death. The interior apartment (which the sinking of the door discovers), exhibits various Tombs, in a sepulchral building; – in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen; – some in motion, some fix'd – In the centre, is a large Skeleton seated on a tomb, (with a Dart in his hand) and, over his head, in characters of Blood is written "THE PUNISHMENT OF FEMALE CURIOSITY."

(Colman 2003a: 84–85)

As marvelous as this device was, another innovation of Colman's proved even more stunning and popular: the introduction of live horses on the stage to replace the

pasteboard ones of the original production at Drury Lane in 1798. The sensation of the horses led Covent Garden manager Henry Harris to commission M.G. Lewis to write an after-piece capitalizing upon the popularity of *Blue-Beard*, and he succeeded with his equestrian extravaganza *Timour the Tartar; A Grand Romantic Melo-Drama in Two Acts* (1811). Eschewing the Gothic special effects that had characterized his earlier smash-hit *The Castle Spectre* (1798), Lewis concentrated on hippodramatic scenes, featuring an elaborate procession on horseback, a mounted single combat and a rousing battle scene with full cavalry to conclude the play.

Both Colman's and Lewis's melodramas contain moments where serious action verges on the comic, and several outright burlesques of their hippodrama quickly followed. Colman himself hurriedly created a parody entitled *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh; Or The Rovers of Weimar* (1811) to capitalize upon the notoriety of *Timour*. He patched together material from two previous parodies, George Canning's *The Rovers; Or, The Double Arrangement* from *The Anti-Jacobin; Or Weekly Examiner* (1798) and Colman's own previous parody of a dress rehearsal, *New Hay at the Old Market* (1795). *The Rovers* had targeted what the *Anti-Jacobin* regarded as the moral bankruptcy of German drama, with two heroines sharing one husband, one of whom has children from an earlier affair. As Cox and Gamer point out, "*The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh* tones down the political attacks of its source. Instead, it presents a British theatre besieged by debilitating economic pressures into accepting the substandard productions of illegitimate authors hawking popular spectacle" (Cox and Gamer 2003: 118). The dress rehearsal section that opens the play features a dialogue between an economically hard-pressed manager and a wily playwright, Mr Bathos, who has a solution: instead of the elaborate equestrian spectacles offered by the more prosperous theatres, choose a humbler quadruped, the donkey, in a marked parody of a horse. The manager worries that "we must not adopt the arrogant fancy of having the power to laugh down rival amusements, which our Patrons, the Publick, have sanctioned by their approbation." Mr Bathos reassures him that, however the play is received, they cannot lose: "If the piece shou'd succeed as a grave representation, in that case, you gain; if it should be well-taken as a Burlesque, why, in that case, you gain also" (Colman 2003b: 120–21). *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh* parodies the overwhelming spectacle of a play like *Timour*, but in doing so ironically provides the kind of extravagance that would delight its public. Colman provides a fitting conclusion to the triple-headed run of *Blue-Beard*, *Timour*, and *Quadrupeds*:

Scene Last: *The outside of the Abbey. Grand Battle with the Soldiers &c. on basket Horses against the Monks. Casimere discovered in Rogero's Dungeon upon a Donkey – leaps the Moat. Fat virgin discover'd on the Drawbridge. She is rescued – and ultimately brought down the stage in a Car, drawn by Donkies – decorated with Dove. Finis.*

(Colman 2003b: 132)

Described as "half-parody and half-spectacle" (Colman 2003b: 117), *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh* joins the company of other Gothic parodies that express a complexly intertextual brew of mockery and appreciation for its original target. Perhaps modern-day readers will join me in wondering how a donkey could leap a moat.

POLITICAL CROSS-CURRENTS IN GOTHIC PARODY

The reviewer of Charles Lucas's anti-Jacobin novel *The Infernal Quixote* (1801) complained that while the work seems "so violent against democracy," the author "yet . . . has made a carpenter's son to turn out a credit, and the lord's son a disgrace, to society" (Anon. 1801: 113). The review ends with a quotation from Ovid that characterizes the cross-currents of the novel:

Both sides in a single body mix,
A single body with a double sex.
(Anon. 1801: 113)

Although many Gothic parodies express a distinctly conservative point of view (see, for example, *The Rovers*), more than a few double back to raise questions about unresolved gender and economic issues at the turn of the century. This crossover is particularly noteworthy in regard to two subjects that often receive satiric treatment in canonical Gothic literature: the tedious, all-too-credulous domestic servant and the sentimental heroine.

From Walpole's garrulous Bianca to Radcliffe's equally verbose Peter in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) to the overly credulous Welsh retainers in the Lee sisters' *The Clergyman's Tale: Pembroke* (1799), domestic servants frequently serve as comic relief in the first Gothics. Their unqualified belief in ghosts and superstitious tales serves as a class marker, separating them from the more enlightened and skeptical attitudes of the upper class. Humphrey in *Powis Castle* (1788) seems a perfect example of this character type. The author of this anonymous work chides his "vulgar and simplistic" mind that still believes in "witchcraft, . . . traditionary legends of magical spells, unlucky persons, and unpropitious days handed down from father to son" (Anon. 1788: 171), but Humphrey, with his misguided belief in a ghost haunting the castle, is actually the first person to alert the clueless Sir Walter to the evil nature of the novel's Satanic villain, Count Parmeni. Several other parodies turn the tables on the upper classes. Thaddy and Quirk outmaneuver their masters in Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800), for instance, and in James Jones's *Hardenbrass and Haverill* (1818) the comic poet-prophet Diggle delivers an inflammatory, anti-aristocracy speech that rouses the mob against the villainous Marquis Hardenbrass. In a strange scene from James White's *The Adventures of John of Gaunt* (1790), nobles are forced to do menial labor:

There (sad vicissitude!) two damsels of an august household, were salting a rump of beef; the king of Kerry was gutting a turkey, the lord abbot of Conway, with a bib under his chin, composing a plum pudding, and the bishop of St. Asaph's spitting a neck of mutton.

(White 1790: 3.135–36)

Such a scene lends credence to a reviewer's remark that White's novels contain a "heterogeneous plan of combining . . . Chivalry and burlesque Ridicule" (Anon. 1791: 231). Yet White's message seems clear enough: "to humble the pride of human kind" and to "instruct" the aristocracy "in the varieties of life" (White 1790: 3.136).

Another disenfranchised class receives scrutiny by the parodies of Gothic literature: the long-suffering, delicately sensitive heroine of sentimental romances. Reaching back to Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1757), this subset of Gothic parody focuses its satire on the female reader of romances. Titles of this durable strain include Eliza Parsons's *Anecdotes of Two Well-Known Families* (1798); F.C. Patrick's *More Ghosts!* (1798); Mary Charlton's *Rosella, Or Modern Occurrences* (1799); Sarah Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810); *Love and Horror* by "Ircastrensis" (1812); Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* (1813); Belin de La Liborlière's *The Hero*, translated into English by Sophia Shedden (1817); and, of course, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (written in 1798; published in 1818). At first glance, nothing could seem more conservative in terms of gender: these stories not only feature a melodramatic heroine whose Gothic fantasies lead her into ridiculous adventures, but also a prudent male voice of reason to teach the "heroine" the error of her ways. Yet these heroines are in their own ways rebel-figures who can imagine a freedom and agency denied to them by prevailing definitions of gender. Parsons early on cites a moderately upper-class woman's lack of education and having "nothing to do" – what she calls a "vegetative state" (Parsons 1798: 1.32) – as reasons for her susceptibility to romance. Barrett's Cherubina, who like Green's Margaritta (actually, Peggy) prefers a romance name to her given Cherry, justifies her extravagant adventures with a spirited swipe at the domestic role she finds untenable:

Better . . . than to remain a domesticated rosy little Miss, who romps with the squire, plays an old tune on an old piano, and reads prayers for the good family – servants and all. At last, marrying some gentleman, who lives on his saddle, she degenerates into a dangler of keys and whipper of children; trots up and down stairs, educates the poultry, and superintends the architecture of pies.

(Barrett 1913: 88)

Although ultimately purged of her Gothic imaginings by a clergyman and the Enlightenment figure of Robert Stuart (Barrett's Henry Tilney), the novel offers, in the delightful insight of Horner and Zlosnik, "an imagined alternative world in which Frenchmen and Irishmen represent excitement rather than threat and in which women are rabble rousers and property owners" (Horner and Zlosnik 2000: 11). Critical re-assessments of *Northanger Abbey* relatedly argue that the imaginative world of Catherine Morland plays some positive role in a novel that offers a gentle parody of the Gothic. All in all, this subset of parodies on woman's reading of Gothic romances provides a fascinating exploration of gender and genre: how female identity at the time was constructed and questioned. Many of the lesser-known titles, such as Patrick's *More Ghosts!* (which features a male over-reader of Gothic tales) and Green's *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (the "Retrospect" of which contains a diatribe against the male commercial Gothic), deserve greater critical attention.

METAFICTION AND PARODY OF THE GOTHIC

Horner and Zlosnik argue that although parody is often marginalized as too derivative a literature, lacking in originality and leaning too much on its source material,

several parodies of the Gothic, in their deft play and ironic allusiveness, exhibit some fairly sophisticated forms of metafictional technique. Charles Lucas's *Infernal Quixote* (1801) features one ballad that tests or even parodies a familiar Gothic convention, the embedding of poetic set-pieces within the main narrative. The villain Marauder has just finished plundering the Irishman O'Connell's house, and at night retires to the study where he finds in a parcel labeled "*German Poetry*" a copy of Bürger's famed "*Leonora*," from which he "perused a few lines" (Lucas 2004: 290). He next turns to the ballad "*Sir Hildebrand*" (an original poem by Lucas) and reads through this thoroughly Gothic tale of a murderous aristocrat who comes to seduce the fair Ellen – he kills the heroine when she only "faintly assents" to be his (Lucas 2004: 292). Marauder frequently intervenes between stanzas with editorial comment, such as "I wish I had been so fortunate as to have found an Ellen in this house" (Lucas 2004: 291). While Marauder, as a free-thinker and atheist "reformer," condemns such tales as "Trash," he yet identifies with its villain. Feeling "not without a little of that sensation he endeavored to despise" (Lucas 2004: 297), a suddenly superstitious Marauder becomes clearly agitated when in the ballad the ghost of Ellen returns to doom Sir Hildebrand to hell. As Marauder reads of the villain's descent, he is startled to hear a "groan" and wonders "Is it possible this old woman's tale can—" (the surmise is left blank) but finds that the sound proceeds from a wounded servant left from the battle (Lucas 2004: 297). Marauder, a heretic disdaining conscience and compassion, at first feels "pity" for the bleeding man. Has the Gothic tale and its insistent moral ("Who dares [God's] power, shall learn to fear his rod,/Who spurns his word, shall tremble at this nod" [Lucas 2004: 298]) awakened Marauder's conscience? Has the ballad set-piece intervened to change the narrative? The answer would appear to be "no," as Marauder recovers himself, brutally murders the servant and rails against the ballad's "trumpery": "the work of some canting Parson" (Lucas 2004: 299). Ashamed at the ballad's impact upon his imagination, he burns the manuscript, but the fire mysteriously spreads to the chimney and the house is consumed. Could this be a sign of divine retribution upon the villain that parallels the one found in the Gothic ballad? In this interlude where the reader reads of Marauder reading the ballad within the narrative, Lucas raises all kinds of questions without resolving them. The chapter seems to provide an instance of the "explained supernatural" (the groan), but the destruction of the house suggests supernatural retribution. If one follows Marauder's contempt for the tale, the text would appear to dismiss Gothic ballads as "Trash," but he is the villain, and the ballad's moral clearly applies to him and his ungodly ways. In calling attention to the text within the text, Lucas poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, set-piece and narrative.

Other examples of Gothic parody that verge on the metafictional concern that most notorious episode in Gothic writing and its reception, Lewis's supposedly blasphemous treatment of scripture in *The Monk* and the alarmed reviews it occasioned. The passage in question dealt with the innocent Antonia's reading of the Bible and the narrator's comment that "the annals of a brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions" (Lewis 2003: 230). Coleridge was the first to decry the "impiety" and "blasphemies" of this contention (1797: 194–200), and T.J. Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* (1798) even argued that the passage made the novel indictable under law. Two parodies of *The Monk* playfully address this controversy.

In that close burlesque of Lewis's novel, *The New Monk*, R.S. has Ann Maria Augusta (his take on Antonia) reading not the Bible but *The Monk* with "*all its improper passages omitted*" (R.S. 2007: 139–40). This expurgation mirrors Elvira's editing of her daughter's reading but may further refer to the fourth edition of *The Monk* (appearing the same year as *The New Monk*, 1798), in which Lewis removed passages deemed offensive by the critics. In *More Ghosts!* F.C. Patrick has Edward, her voice of reason, blame the maid Betsey's lustful behavior on her reading of salacious passages from the Bible. This charge begins a debate, as the Reverend Seymour rushes in to defend reading of scripture by women, but the narrative is abruptly interrupted by the author's daughter who questions the propriety of her mother's writing on this subject: "what does the Bible have to do with 'More Ghosts'? . . . people don't like to have serious subjects obtruded upon them in a novel" (Patrick 1798: 3.159–60). Mother quickly agrees and decides that as "this [was] not a proper vehicle for religious subjects, I had better print Mr Seymour's speeches in a penny pamphlet separately, and proceed with this in mere narrative" (Patrick 1798: 3.160). Patrick evokes the hot topic of *The Monk* controversy only to have mother and daughter comically defuse it, and she undermines her fiction of an extra-textual reality for her Reverend Seymour by giving voice to the more intimate and "real" presence of her daughter. In playing with the relation between fiction and reality, she ironically calls into question the idea that such novels as hers are not fit for the treatment of "serious subjects."

This brief survey of works that parody Gothic literature can only give some idea of their range of satirical approaches and strategies. The primary texts listed in the References section provide a starting point for those who might like to explore the subject more fully.

REFERENCES

- Anon (1788) *Powis Castle: Or, Anecdotes of an Antient Family*, London.
— (1791) Review of *The Adventures of Richard Coeur de Lion* by James White, *The Monthly Review*, 6:321.
— (1801) *Tales of Terror*, London.
— (1801) Review of *The Infernal Quixote* by James White, *The Critical Review*, 33:113.
— (2009a) "Grim, King of the Ghosts," 1801, in D.H. Thomson (ed.) *Tales of Wonder*, by M.G. Lewis, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 260–65.
— (2009b) "The Wolf-King or Little Red-Riding-Hood," 1801, in D.H. Thomson (ed.) *Tales of Wonder*, by M.G. Lewis, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 250–54.
Barrett, E.S. (1813) *The Heroine*, London.
Bogel, F.V. (2001) *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Coleridge, S.T. (1797) Review of *The Monk*, *The Critical Review*, 19: 194–200.
Colman the Younger, G. (2003a) *Blue-Beard; Or, Female Curiosity!* in J. Cox and M. Gamer (eds) *Romantic Drama*, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 75–96.
— (2003b) *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh; or The Rovers of Weimar!* in J. Cox and M. Gamer (eds) *Romantic Drama*, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 117–32.

- Cox, J. and M. Gamer (2003) "Introduction" to *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh in The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 117–18.
- Dacre, C. (1805) "Grimalkin's Ghost," in *Hours of Solitude*, London, 60–62.
- Dentith, S. (2000) *Parody*, London: Routledge.
- Gamer, M. (2000) *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, S. (2010) *Romance Readers and Romance Writers: A Satirical Novel*, 1810, ed. C. Goulding, London: Pickering and Chatto.
- Horner, A. and Zlosnik, S. (2000) "Dead Funny: Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* as Comic Gothic," *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* 5. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.cf.ac.uk/journals/corvey/articles/cc05_no2.pdf> (accessed September 21, 2012).
- (2005) *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hutcheon, L. (1989) *The Politics of Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge.
- "Ircastrensis" (2008) *Love and Horror*, 1812, ed. N. Neill, Kansas City: Valancourt.
- Jeffrey, F. (1812) Review of *Rejected Addresses*, *Edinburgh Review*, 20: 444–46.
- Lamb, C. (1935) *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas, 3 vols, London: J.M. Dent.
- Lewis, M.G. (2003) *The Monk*, eds D.L. Macdonald and K. Scherf, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- (2009a) "Giles Jollup the Grave, and Brown Sally Green" in D.H. Thomson (ed.) *Tales of Wonder*, by M.G. Lewis, Peterborough: ON: Broadview Press, 65–68.
- (2009b) *Tales of Wonder*, 1801, ed. D.H. Thomson. Peterborough: ON: Broadview Press.
- Lucas, C. (2004) *The Infernal Quixote*, 1801, ed. M.O. Grenby, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- Lee, S. (1799) *The Clergyman's Tale; Or, Pembroke*, vol. 3 of *Canterbury Tales*, G.G. and J. Robinson.
- Mathias, T.J. (1798) *The Pursuits of Literature*, 7th edn, London.
- Milbank, A. (2004) "Gothic Satires." Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.ampltd.co.uk/digital_guides/gothic_fiction/AlisonMilbank1.aspx> (accessed September 21, 2012).
- Parsons, E. (1798) *Anecdotes of Two Well-Known Families*, 6 vols, London.
- Patrick, F.C. (1798) *More Ghosts!* 3 vols, London.
- R.S., Esq. (2007) *The New Monk*, 1798, ed. E. Andrews, Kansas City: Valancourt.
- Robberds, J.W. (1843) *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich*, 2 vols, London.
- Ruff, J.W. (1930) "A Study of Walter Scott's *An Apology for Tales of Terror*," unpublished thesis, Yale University.
- Smith, H. (2000) "Fire and Ale," 1812, in G. Stones and J. Strachan (eds) *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, vol. 2, London: Pickering and Chatto, 71–73.
- Southey, R. (1799) *Poems*, London.
- White, J. (1790) *The Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster*, London.

FURTHER READING

- Evans, B. (1947) *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (Examines two Gothic parodies: Dennis Lawler's *The Earls of Hammersmith; Or, The Cellar Spectre* and J. Cobb's *The Haunted Tower*.)

- Hutcheon, L. (1985) *A Theory of Parody*, London: Methuen. (Influentially reappraises parody as “imitation with a critical difference.”)
- May, L.C. (1980) *Parodies of the Gothic Novel*, New York: Arno Press. (In addition to chapters on Austen, Peacock, and Barrett, offers brief discussion of such lesser-known parodists as Green and Charlton.)
- Neill, N. (2009) “Gothic Parody and the Novel, 1750–1850,” unpublished thesis, York University. (Argues that parody did not signal the end to Gothic fiction but provided new directions for the development of the novel.)
- Sage, V. (1994) “Gothic Laughter: Farce and Horror in Five Texts,” in A. Lloyd Smith and V. Sage (eds) *Gothic Origins and Innovations*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 190–203. (Discusses the presence of humor in works by Radcliffe, Dickens, Le Fanu, Stoker, and Stephen King.)
- Weiss, F. (1975) *The Antic Spectre: Satire in Early Gothic Novels*, New York: Arno Press. (Argues that the satire of fantastic elements in Gothic fiction paved the way for greater realism in the novel.)
- Worrall, D. (2012) “The Political Culture of Gothic Drama,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 148–60. (Provides detailed documentation of how these largely neglected plays give voice to “artisan radicalism.”)

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

FIGURING THE AUTHOR IN MODERN GOTHIC WRITING



Neil McRobert

To understand the figuration of the author within the contemporary Gothic, it is first essential to recognize the genre's notable fixation on the written word. With the advent of postmodernism, the Gothic's focus on textuality has tended toward an overt metafictional staging of textual engagement. The writing process is now a recurrent theme within Gothic writing. This is not a truly new phenomenon, however, but the inverse of a long-standing interest in reading that has been present in the Gothic since its formative phase (1764–1820). Postmodern culture has replaced reading with writing as the focus of the Gothic's innate self-reflexivity, but this is not a paradigm shift; instead, it is a development within a genre that has always had much to say about readers, writers, texts and the relationship between them.

The Gothic has always presented reading as a potentially dangerous activity. In the inaugural texts, particularly those by Ann Radcliffe and her imitators, to read is to transgress the orders of reason and to enter into a world of terror and uncertainty. Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) both derive much of their mystery and suspense from the protagonist's encounter with the written word. Even critics who point to the positive representations of reading in the early Gothic still concede its multiple dangers (Pearson 1999: 100–121). Though the heroine of *Udolpho* faces kidnap, incarceration and the underlying threat of rape, her accidental reading of a forbidden document “which had roused equally her curiosity and terror” remains a fundamental source of fear (Radcliffe 2001: 99). The same tension between curiosity and fear is also articulated in *The Romance of the Forest*. When Adeline finds a macabre manuscript, “She feared to read the coming sentence, yet curiosity prompted her to proceed” (Radcliffe 1986: 139). The contrast between fear and fascination is related to Radcliffe's ideas on the sublime, which regarded uncertainty as the inspiration for both (Radcliffe 2000: 163–73). Interrupted, obscured manuscripts thus inspire fear and curiosity in both reader and protagonist alike. Beyond these aesthetic concerns, however, Radcliffe's representation of the reading experience as a source of terror is also related to the Gothic mode's inherent self-reflexivity. Critics have noted Gothic's particular self-consciousness; Catherine Spooner claims that in comparison to other genres “Gothic has a greater degree of self-consciousness about its nature,

cannibalistically consuming the dead body of its own tradition” (Spooner 2006: 10). This type of observation, while valid, refers only to one aspect of the genre’s self-consciousness: its use of intertextual reference. Radcliffe’s portrayal of reading does something more than this. By making her heroine a reader, Radcliffe is able to comment upon the experience of reading Gothic novels. The combination of terror and curiosity felt by Adeline de Montalt or Emily St Aubert is reflective of the sensation that Radcliffe’s texts seek to impose upon the reader. As Chloe Chard suggests, “in describing the process by which Adeline reads the manuscript, *The Romance of the Forest* underlines the promise of horror and terror on which its own narrative structure is based” (Chard 1986: vii). In this way, Radcliffe’s texts can be considered as metafictional insofar as their internal representation of reading draws attention to their own status as textual object.

Though much of this metafictional insight is organized around the role of the reader, there are also moments within Radcliffe’s fiction that allude to the authorial role too. In *Udolpho*, Emily, frustrated at the failure of literature to lift her spirits, reaches the precocious conclusion that “the fire of the poet is in vain, if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own, however it may be inferior to his in power” (Radcliffe 2001: 362). Her observation recognizes the existence of an author, and by extrapolation, Radcliffe herself, not least of all in the preoccupations with notions of female genius in *The Romance of the Forest*. By suggesting the existence of an author, Radcliffe’s protagonists encourage the reader to acknowledge the authorial origins of the text as a whole. Indeed, it has been argued that, as well as being readers, Radcliffe’s heroines represent her own struggle as a female writer. Robert Miles argues that

Radcliffe and her heroines are one, but not in any cryptic, biographical sense . . . [she] projects the struggle to maintain her voice, as a female writer, into the body of her texts in the displaced form of the heroine under threat.

(Miles 2000: 46)

Two centuries later Stephen King would repeat this same self-projection in *Misery* (1987). Perhaps the most explicit treatment of the terrifying properties of writing, *Misery* is both distinctively postmodern and firmly indebted to Radcliffe’s figuration of the reader and writer within the Gothic text. The novel shares Radcliffe’s interest in the shared subject positions of reader and protagonist but complicates this by making the protagonist an author. It is King’s novel that makes the most explicit connections between writing and the traditional Gothic scenario, and it is also the most effective and elaborate exploration of the Gothic function of the author-protagonist.

The contemporary Gothic abounds with author-protagonists, and their inclusion offers numerous benefits to writers within the genre. At a practical level, they aid the plot, freeing the narrative from the constraints of a protagonist’s conventional working lifestyle and suggesting an imaginative temperament more attuned to the uncanny and/or supernatural occurrences ahead. In some instances, however, the author-protagonist is put to more complex use. Texts such as *Misery* (1987) and Chuck Palahniuk’s *Haunted* (2005) derive much of their Gothic status from the representation of the writing process. The author-protagonists in these novels

experience writing as a form of Gothic terror. Writing is rendered analogous to the genre's definitive perils: claustrophobia, incarceration, torture, rape and the dissolution of identity. In addition, these texts also continue and develop the metafictional aspects of Radcliffe's treatment of reading and writing. Because the author-protagonists are involved in the production of Gothic texts, their suffering is representative of a genre in which they are both working as authors and situated as characters. Just as Adeline's reading in *The Romance of the Forest* parallels the reading of that text, so writing *within* these contemporary Gothic texts functions as a commentary on the production of those texts themselves. They are what Robert Miles describes as "belated Gothic": texts "which in their self-consciousness, bespeak both an awareness of the discursive subtext of the Gothic, and an attitude towards it" (Miles 1993: 13). They also clearly exemplify Linda Hutcheon's theory of the metafictional as being primarily concerned with the recognition of both the production and reception of texts as cultural artifacts (Hutcheon 1980: xiii). However, true to Gothic form, these texts often give expression to a monstrous version of Hutcheon's concept of the metafictional by representing the production and reception of fiction as the location of horror.

Again, it is *Misery* that epitomizes this self-referential Gothic mode. The novel focuses on Paul Sheldon, author of a highly successful series of popular historical romances featuring the Radcliffean heroine, Misery Chastain. After a car-crash Paul is rescued by his "number one fan," a mentally ill woman named Annie Wilkes. He awakens in her house where, crippled and bed-ridden, he is completely at her mercy. Annie, enraged to discover that he has "killed" Misery, resorts to increasingly extreme tortures in an attempt to force Paul to write the character back to life. She makes him drink rinse-water, withholds his painkillers, and finally cuts off his foot and thumb. Annie points out how easily she could have castrated Paul instead, and his fear of this eventuality persists throughout the novel. Though these episodes provide the novel's most visceral moments of physical horror, Paul's psychological terror is persistently connected to his writing. Dominick Grace points out that most of King's novels, not least of all *Misery*, are "as much about fiction making as they are about anything else, and they function as horror texts primarily by rendering writing itself problematic, if not monstrous" (Grace 2010: 63). As the novel progresses, writing accrues monstrous overtones and Annie, though never any less terrifying in a physical sense, increasingly becomes a signifier of different type of torture than that imposed by her axe. As a coercive figure who is insistent that Paul return to the genre that he abhors, Annie becomes an analogue for the ravenous audience that the writer regards as a threat to his artistic autonomy. For Paul, the usurpation of creative control is unendurable. He is horrified that she "would do that to him – that she *could*, when he had spent most of his adult life thinking the word *writer* was the most important definition of himself – [it] made her seem utterly monstrous, something he *must* escape" (King 1987: 32).

Horror, monstrosity and escape: each of these terms is replete with Gothic significance, as is the theme of threatened identity. The early Gothic posits a link between identity and chastity; an attack on the latter threatens the stability of the former. *Misery* echoes this by sexualizing Paul's authorial crisis. Sex and writing are often connected in King's work, but *Misery* emphasizes the deviancy of the association (see Lant 1998). For Paul, writing takes on masturbatory connotations,

and genre-writing is associated metaphorically with prostitution. The relationship between the author and reader is described as “nasty as a hand-job in a sleazy bar, fine as a fuck from the world’s most talented call girl” (King 1987: 265). Paul is the call girl in this analogy but he has been made so by Annie’s insistence on his return to genre fiction. The threat of castration is figured in terms of Annie’s dominance of Paul’s creativity, as writing is closely entwined with his sense of masculine identity. *Misery*’s fundamental theme is Paul’s attempt to redress his emasculation. This struggle is evoked in depictions of symbolic violation. Paul describes his resuscitation by Annie as being “raped back into life” (King 1987: 7). At the novel’s climax, however, it is Paul who engages in sexualized violence. Choking Annie with the pages of his completed manuscript he tells her: “I’m gonna rape you, all right Annie. I’m gonna rape you because all I can do is the worst I can do. So suck my book. Suck my book. Suck on it until you fucking CHOKE” (King 1987: 347). The figure of the author has thus fallen prey to a fundamental Gothic threat: corruption – of his work, his identity and his virtue alike.

Identity is linked to another pair of Gothic tropes – spectrality and imprisonment – in Paul’s imagining of himself as “a ghost behind that board, pent in like a prisoner” (King 1987: 67). The board in question is a piece of wood that Annie balances on the arms of his wheelchair to serve as a writing desk. This effectively seals him into the wheelchair as an automaton working to produce Annie’s pleasure. He becomes a piece of literary livestock with no more rights or autonomy than the pet pig that Annie has named after her favorite character. It becomes clear, then, that Paul’s experience of writing mirrors the suffering experienced by his archetypally Gothic heroine. His situation begins to echo hers, or alternatively, to inspire it. They are both resurrected from near death, *Misery*’s rescue from premature burial paralleling Paul’s resuscitation by Annie; they are both persecuted and imprisoned, *Misery* in the cave of an African cult, Paul in Annie’s cabin. He is an author-protagonist writing a Gothic novel while inhabiting the role of Gothic victim, a living analogue of his own creation. Yet while *Misery* is abused and incarcerated according to genre convention, Paul’s suffering stems from his entrapment within the production of that genre.

Entrapment and claustrophobia are the unifying motifs that most obviously tie *Misery* to its Gothic lineage and aid its self-reflexive commentary on the writing process. Paul is doubly trapped: physically entombed within his own broken body and the Gothic space of Annie’s house, and metaphorically confined within the limitations of genre. His reaction to finishing the final *Misery* novel, prior to his car-accident, is to cry out “Free at last! Free at last! Great God Almighty I’m free at last!” (King 1987: 16). An enforced return to romance is thus a form of imprisonment in which the conventions and clichés of the genre are as stifling as the walls of any Gothic castle or dungeon. Annie functions as *Misery*’s version of the traditional Gothic villain. Like *Udolpho*’s Montoni, or the deviant Ambrosio in Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796), Annie is both responsible for the victim’s incarceration and representative of the inherent threat that it poses. Like Agnes in *The Monk*, Paul is imprisoned within a claustrophobic Gothic space, his dead progeny at his side, though in this instance the corpse is not his child but the ruined manuscript of a recently completed novel that Annie has forced him to destroy. Her insistence that he return to genre fiction and resurrect *Misery* exaggerates the relationship between

writing and imprisonment presented in *Udolpho*. Montoni incarcerates Madame St Aubert to force her into signing legal documents. In *Misery* the same contract is established, though here the price of freedom is a lengthy fiction.

If Annie is a Gothic villain, she is also, undoubtedly, a reader. This occasions a problematic shift in subject positions for the reader of King's novel. Whereas the Gothic had traditionally paired the reader and the heroine through their mutual search for answers (see Chard 1986: vii–ix), *Misery* requires the reader to acknowledge their own complicity with the novel's antagonist, as their desire to know what happens to Paul mirrors Annie's need to know what happens to Misery. At a metafictional level, this association is even more troubling. John Sears suggests that "Deeply structured by the tropes of confinement and escape, *Misery* enacts a *mise en scène* crucial to a comprehension of King's Gothic: the writer as prisoner trapped within a world drastically redefined by his own work and its consumers" (2011: 125). Annie, as a consumer of Paul's fiction, serves as an exaggeratedly monstrous allegory for King's own insatiable audience. Her physical abuse of Paul is merely a Gothic literalization of the abuse of the author by an ever-demanding readership, critical establishment and publishing industry. Annie fulfills these additional roles. She is a critic of Paul's work, burning his literary novel and demanding that he rewrite an unsatisfactory first draft of *Misery's Return*. Paul is unconcerned by her dislike of the former as he considers her too ignorant to understand its nuances. However, her rejection of the latter forces him to recognize that she is more than just a mindless consumer of popular fiction: she is in fact *a reader* with an implicit understanding of the rules governing the creative process. Paul is horrified to find that "Constant Reader had just become Merciless Editor" (King 1987: 115). In Annie's case "merciless" is meant literally. Paul muses about the banality of future conflict with an editor: "Anyway, I just wanted to tell you to go ahead and do your worst – I've discovered a whole new critical mode, my friend" (King 1987: 126). Similarly, she aims to act as a publisher of Paul's finished text. She studies up on book binding in order to bind the only copy of *Misery's Return*. An early outline of the novel emphasizes the horror of the publishing allegory. The initial intention was for Paul to die and for his skin to be used as binding for the single existent copy of *Misery's Return* (King 2000: 193–95). The intended title for this alternate version of the novel, "The Annie Wilkes Edition," raises issues of textual ownership while privileging Annie as reader rather than Paul as writer.

Annie thus functions as a nightmarish microcosm of the industry feeding on the publication of genre literature. The author is a beleaguered figure, at the mercy of an inhuman, voracious appetite. In focusing on the author's terror, *Misery* becomes a Gothic novel about the Gothic nature of Gothic writing. A further complexity arises when Paul begins to welcome writing as an escape from pain, even though it is still the primary cause of his suffering. When presented with an opportunity to attempt escape, Paul instead returns to his room to write the book that he professes to abhor, delaying escape until "another day, yes. He would know that day when it came around. What he wanted to do now was write" (King 1987: 176). This despite his claims that, "working on it was torture and finishing it was going to mean the end of his life" (King 1987: 279). The solution to this paradox is found in *Misery's* representation of writing as a masochistic act. According to Paul, "writers remember everything. Especially the hurts. Strip a writer to the buff, point to the scars, and

he'll tell you the story of each small one. From the big ones you get novels, not amnesia" (King 1987: 258). In *Misery*, then, to write is to inflict pain on oneself, or masochistically to dwell on the memory of its infliction by others. The novel's conclusion underlines this principle. Having escaped Annie physically, Paul nonetheless remains trapped by the memory of his ordeal. He is suffering from writer's block, which only relents when he imagines Annie back into existence as his terrifying muse: "the *writer's* scenario was that Annie is still alive" (King 1987: 365). He is then able to write but this process reveals the extent to which Paul has come, perversely, to value his ordeal as a source of inspiration. He may write once again at the end of the novel, but the final image of him, hunched over his desk, "unaware that he was weeping as he wrote" (King 1987: 370), exposes his creative dependence on trauma: a trauma that, as a writer, he willfully pursues.

The link between writing and trauma also forms the thematic core of Chuck Palahniuk's *Haunted*. Though their styles differ wildly, Palahniuk shares with King a focus on popular culture, the use of anecdote and storytelling, and the redeployment of Gothic tropes. Palahniuk, however, presents a far more caustic version of the contemporary cultural scene. Escape through creativity may be unobtainable in King's fiction, but it is rejected outright in Palahniuk's. *Fight Club* (1996), *Survivor* (1999) and *Lullaby* (2002) share a Gothicized landscape of isolation, spiritual vacuity and meaningless superficiality that is maintained by the oppressive influence of popular culture. Popular culture and the media operate as a disembodied Gothic authority, isolating the individual and working to undermine any cohesive sense of identity. As Palahniuk is himself a popular author, he possesses a "dual status as a writer who operates within a mass, popular market as well as one who comments upon that industry" (Simmons and Allen 2009: 116). This is another definition of Miles's "belated Gothic" and thus incorporates Palahniuk into a Gothic tradition, despite the highly experimental style of his writing.

In *Haunted* Palahniuk directs his self-reflexivity specifically at the writing process and reiterates its association with suffering. His figuring of the author is more complex than King's, however, as it suggests that authors are not the tragic-heroic victims of audience and industry, but willing collaborators in their own torture. The pursuit of literary integrity that haunts King's authors is rejected in *Haunted* in favor of commercial incentive.

Invited to what they imagine to be a bucolic writer's retreat, the eighteen protagonists find themselves imprisoned in a decaying theatre by the mysterious Mr Whittier. They are amply provided for but informed that they will not be released until their magnum opus is complete. Their ordeal within the theatre is narrated by an unspecified, but seemingly omniscient, member of the group, or, alternatively, by the collective "we" formed from the group-consciousness of the imprisoned community. This connective narrative frames a number of self-contained personal narratives, each of which explains the reason for the respective character's involvement in the program. These characters are distinguished by nicknames that reflect aspects of their own narrative. Several of these nicknames allude to an aristocratic hierarchy traditionally caricatured in the Gothic: Baroness Frostbite, Countess Foresight, the Earl of Slander and Duke of Vandals, amongst others. Indeed, *Haunted* is highly self-referential about its Gothic overtones. The protagonists compare their meeting to that summer in the Villa Diodati that engendered Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and the

discovery of a collection of stage costumes encourages their fantasy: “we’re all keeping warm in frilly Lord Byron poet blouses. Or Mary Shelley long skirts filled with petticoats. Dracula capes lined with red satin. Heavy Frankenstein boots” (Palahniuk 2005: 148). This passage is indicative of the protagonists’ literary attitude, concerned more with cosmetic effect than any deeper, substantial meaning. They dress the part of the stock-Romantic characters they wish to portray, not realizing that they are conflating historical figures with Gothic creations. The effect is a Gothic ideal with no basis in historical truth, as is their own intended narrative of their time spent in the theatre. The erroneous absorption of Dracula into the Diodati analogy is compounded by the later claim that the Villa Diodati was the house “on Lake Como . . . where Lord Byron raped Mary Shelley” (Palahniuk 2005: 60). While these errors indicate the protagonists’ ignorance, they are integral to Palahniuk’s sophisticated metatextual commentary. The claim about rape imbues the story of *Frankenstein*’s creation with a Gothic tone that rivals the text itself. This is the exact tactic that *Haunted*’s author-protagonists wish to pursue. They crave Shelley’s fame rather than her literary stature. The initial thematic resemblance to *Misery*’s treatment of confinement and torture as an incentive for creativity is undermined by the inversion of the causal link between pain and production. The protagonists of *Haunted* do not write to avoid suffering; they suffer to avoid writing. The damage they endure is of their own making, a way to circumvent the necessary effort required to create a marketable piece of writing. The trauma itself becomes the product to be sold.

At the opening of the text, before they have entered the theatre, the narrator expresses an affirmative, Romantic notion of writing as escape:

This much time, we’d bet on our own ability to create some masterpiece. A short story or poem or screenplay or memoir that would make sense of our life. A masterpiece that would buy our way out of slavery to a husband or a parent or a corporation. That would earn our freedom.

(Palahniuk 2005: 8)

Yet once within the theatre and faced with the necessity of writing for escape, they adopt a more cynical approach: “Screw the idea of creating anything original. It’s no use, writing some let’s-pretend piece of fiction. That takes so much effort for what little you get in cash money” (Palahniuk 2005: 86). This market awareness echoes Hutcheon’s theory of metafictional interest in the production and reception of fiction. As in Palahniuk’s earlier texts, but to a much greater extent, commercial self-consciousness acquires Gothic consequence as the protagonists’ desire for marketability is realized in their creation of a marketable narrative of an excessively Gothic scenario. The group-narrator explains that “the best story we’d bring out of this building would be just how we survived. Still, that story would have to be good enough. Exciting enough. Scary and dangerous enough. We’d have to make sure it was” (Palahniuk 2005: 100). Each character vies to be the most tormented, the most traumatized, so as to become the recognizable “face” of the ordeal in the media-frenzy they assume will greet their eventual escape. This escape, however, is endlessly deferred as they struggle to create a situation that is bad enough: “unless one of us coughs up a new-fangled *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*, our own story will have

to get a lot more dramatic before it would be worth selling. We need everything to get much, much worse before it's all over" (Palahniuk 2005: 86).

First they sabotage food and power supplies before proceeding to self-mutilation, cutting off appendages with increasing severity until one character makes the ultimate sacrifice of self-castration. The characters of *Haunted* undergo similar treatment to Paul Sheldon but, whereas Paul's torture is a coercive act designed to make him write, the bodily abuse in *Haunted* is a self-imposed alternative to the act of writing. Furthermore, the act of self-castration highlights the contrast between this text and King's. In severing his own penis, the protagonist willfully enters into the very agony that most haunts Paul Sheldon throughout his imprisonment. This reveals the extent to which *Haunted* is an inversion (and perversion) of *Misery*: a primal fear reduced to the price of fame. Following the death of the self-castrator from loss of blood, another character immediately attempts to eat the penis, and chokes. Later in the novel the protagonists remove and eat the buttock of a (supposedly) dead companion. The episodes of cannibalism serve as darkly comic enactments of the commercial consumption that haunt all of the texts discussed in this chapter.

Anything, it seems, is better than having to actually write. Lady Baglady mutilates her own hand into "just a paddle of skin and bone, just the palm with all the fingers and thumb hacked off" (Palahniuk 2005: 224). In the process of attempting to *become* the story she has rendered herself literally unable to write one. Though while conventional writing is rejected, their self-harm constitutes a Gothic narrative, inscribed on their bodies rather than on the page. David Punter, writing on the relationship between the body and the text, states that in the Gothic

we find tales of self-mutilation, self-torture, in the end self destruction . . . and thus we loop back again to abuse . . . in which the body is the site for a struggle which can end only in death or in the blankness which results most effectively from trauma.

(Punter 1998: 17)

Paul Sheldon's body is obviously a site of struggle and the "blankness" is found in his writer's block. More interestingly, though, Punter's point is also applicable to *Haunted*, albeit in an inverted form. Here self-mutilation *is* the story rather than the story's inspiration, and the "blankness" is not the absence of a story to tell but a result of the telling. At the end of *Haunted* a character explains that "some stories, the more you tell them, the faster you use them up. The other kind of story, it uses you up . . . Telling some stories, is committing suicide" (Palahniuk 2005: 337). The fatal consequences of storytelling are two-fold. The inscription of a Gothic narrative onto the protagonists' bodies results in physical deterioration while their oral accounts of past experiences reveal a shared hopelessness. The stories they tell are not the stories that they want told. They flagellate their bodies so that they will have another, more marketable story with which to replace their own obscene histories.

The desire for marketability, like the opposing desire for literary recognition in *Misery*, results in entrapment. Presented with an open door, *Haunted's* surviving characters instead return willfully, like Paul, to their Gothic prison to await the completion of their narrative. However, unlike *Misery's* *Return*, their project will never be complete because they will never be able to "get their stories perfect"

(Palahniuk 2005: 8). They have no overbearing Gothic villain: he ends the novel outside the theatre begging to be allowed back inside. Instead they are trapped by their inability to achieve narrative closure. Punter refers to the “text instead”: that ideal text which is “always more perfect, more preserved from arbitrary incursion than the text we have, in any reasonable or daylight scenario, succeeded in writing ourselves” (Punter 1998: 2). This elusive standard and its potential limitation of commercial success are what finally imprison the survivors in Palahniuk’s novel. Like an author endlessly trying to perfect his work, they reject the chance of escape, choosing to “sit here, waiting to be saved. While we’re still victims, hoping to be discovered while we suffer” (Palahniuk 2005: 383). Thus the fight for authorial independence that constitutes the battleground in *Misery* is rejected in Palahniuk’s text. His characters surrender the creative dignity that Paul so fiercely protects, choosing instead to pursue their own degradation in search of financial reward. *Haunted*, then, can be read as a rewriting of *Misery* for a post-millennial culture in which even the fundamental Gothic struggle for the preservation of self has succumbed to the sinister authority of the capitalist system.

These texts are only two salient examples of the contemporary Gothic’s self-reflexive turn toward the author. There are numerous other texts that offer similar, or alternative, uses of the author-protagonist and also texts that employ protagonists involved in other branches of the creative arts. King has recently returned to the issue of dangerous creativity in *Lisey’s Story* (2006), framing a Gothic scenario around linguistic idiom and the eternal question of the source of a writer’s ideas. Decades before *Haunted*, Margaret Atwood offered her own blackly comic response to the commercial impulse behind Gothic fiction in *Lady Oracle* (1982). Here, the author-protagonist resorts to faking her own death in order to escape the ignominy of being revealed as an author of Gothic romances. Perhaps the most intricate Gothic metafiction of recent years, however, is Bret Easton Ellis’s *Lunar Park* (2005), the complexities of which would require a substantial discussion to document adequately. The novel masquerades as a biography of the author, though its steady divergence from historical truth reveals a metafictional commentary on the consequences of self-mythologizing. It is also a self-confessed homage to King’s early metafiction. The linguistic nature of writing is not necessarily essential to the project, and in many cases other disciplines serve the same metafictional purpose of illustrating the terrifying consequences of creativity. King’s *Duma Key* (2008) is familiar territory, in which the creative act impacts upon the fabric of the creator’s work. This novel differs only in that the artist in question is a painter yet even he refers to his pictorial art in terms denoting writing, referring to them as scribbles (King 2008: 86), and despite the shift in medium the act of creation invokes the same paradoxical tension between threat and pleasure that typifies King’s representation of writing.

The dangers of creativity and the self-reflexivity with which the concept is explored have become key components of the contemporary Gothic. As already stated, the focus on textuality is not a phenomenon that is new to the Gothic. However, the transition from figuring the reader to figuring the author opens up new metafictional avenues in which the commercial contexts of writing are available as sources of terror. More fundamentally, there is also a deeper psychological agenda pursued in the contemporary Gothic’s figuring of the author. These texts subvert the traditionally Romantic notion of creativity as power. Whereas the Romantics proclaimed the

godlike capabilities of the imagination, the consistent theme within fiction of this type is the failure of writing (or creativity) to master or surmount trauma. Author-protagonists often perceive writing as an escape or an exertion of control, but most often, like Paul Sheldon and the writers in *Haunted*, they are forced to recognize either their own powerlessness or the need to conform. The contemporary writer is revealed to be at the mercy of external agency, whether it be the monstrous figure of the reader or the malignant authority of the culture industry. Such heteronomy is traumatic for the author figure and because writing is the author's only means of overcoming trauma the recognition of its role in causing the distress leaves the author no means of escape. Perhaps the ultimate Gothic conclusion to be drawn, then, is that writing can open or inflict wounds but can never sufficiently heal them.

REFERENCES

- Chard, C. (1986) "Introduction," in A. Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, vii–xxiv.
- Grace, D. (2010) "Writers and Metafiction in Three Stephen King Texts," in G. Hoppenstand (ed.) *Critical Insights: Stephen King*, Pasadena, CA: Salem Press.
- Hutcheon, L. (1980) *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- King, S. (1987) *Misery*, London: Hodder.
- (2000) *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, London: Hodder.
- (2008) *Duma Key*, London: Hodder.
- Lant, K.M. (1998) "The Rape of the Constant Reader: Stephen King's Construction of the Female Reader and Violation of the Female Body in *Misery*," in K.M. Lant and T. Thompson (eds) *Imagining the Worst: Stephen King and the Representation of Women*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 89–114.
- Miles, R. (1993) *Gothic Writing, 1750–1820: A Genealogy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (1995) *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (2000) "Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis," in D. Punter (ed.) *A Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 41–57.
- Palahniuk, C. (2005) *Haunted*, London: Vintage.
- Pearson, J. (1999) *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Punter, D. (1998) *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body and the Law*, London: Macmillan.
- Radcliffe, A. (1986) *The Romance of the Forest*, 1791, ed. C. Chard, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2000) "On the Supernatural in Poetry," 1826, in E.J. Clery and R. Miles (eds) *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook, 1700–1820*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 163–71.
- (2001) *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, ed. J. Howard, London: Penguin.
- Sears, J. (2011) *Stephen King's Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Simmons, D. and Allen, N. (2009) "Reading Chuck Palahniuk's *Survivor* and *Haunted* as a Critique of 'The Culture Industry,'" in C. Kuhn and L. Rubin (eds) *Reading Chuck Palahniuk: American Monsters and Literary Mayhem*, New York: Routledge, 116–28.
- Spooner, C. (2006) *Contemporary Gothic*, London: Reaktion.

FURTHER READING

- Carey, P. (2003) *My Life as a Fake*, London: Faber. (A contemporary revision of *Frankenstein*, in which the writer is haunted by his own literary creation-made-flesh.)
- Hutcheon, L. (1980) *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press. (One of the earliest and most influential full-length studies of metafiction.)
- King, S. (1977) *The Shining*, London: Hodder. (Dramatizes the psychological disintegration of an author and forges links between writing and haunting.)
- (1989) *The Dark Half*, London: Hodder. (King's most elaborate version of a recurrent trope, namely the ability of a writer to imagine something terrifying into existence.)
- (1990) "Secret Window, Secret Garden," in *Four Past Midnight*, London: Hodder (The final installment in King's "writing about writing.")
- (1998) *Bag of Bones*, London: Hodder. (King's most thorough treatment of the terrors of writer's block.)
- Ligotti, T. (2010) "Notes on the Writing of Horror: A Story," 1986, in *Songs of a Dead Dreamer*, Burton, MI, Subterranean Press. (This short story takes the appearance of a guide on how to write horror but gradually reveals itself to be a horror story.)
- Palahniuk, C. (2002) *Lullaby*, London: Jonathan Cape. (Gothicizes both the reading and the writing process in a narrative detailing pursuit of text that is literally able to kill.)
- Shelley, M. (2003) *Frankenstein*, 1818, ed. M. Hindle, London: Penguin. (The original novel exploring the monstrous potential of creation.)
- Straub, P. (2005) *In the Night Room*, London: HarperCollins. (Straub, like King, frequently employs author-protagonists. Here, recurrent protagonist Timothy Underhill "meets" and falls in love with a character he is in the process of writing.)
- Waugh, P. (1984) *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, London: Methuen. (Another key text in the study of textual self-consciousness.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

GOTHIC AND THE QUESTION OF THEORY, 1900–PRESENT



Scott Brewster

Given the current proliferation of Gothic cultures, and the corresponding diversification of Gothic criticism and theory, do we inhabit an age peculiarly susceptible to its attractions? Or is there something inherent to Gothic that has generated, even demanded, new forms of critique as it has mutated since it emerged in the later eighteenth century? Gothic has fostered an array of theoretical approaches in the last century, and yet the possibility of providing a single definition – generic, thematic, conceptual – of the term becomes ever more remote. Nonetheless, after nearly 250 years, we return compulsively to the task: as Lucie Armitt comments, “we cannot leave the Gothic alone, because it deals in what will not leave us alone. It is everywhere and yet nowhere” (Armitt 2011: 12). As this essay was being completed, two examples of Gothic’s ubiquity, and pervasive capacity to interpretation, caught the attention. The first was the UK release of Tim Burton’s *Frankenweenie* (2012), timed to coincide with Halloween and school half-term breaks. The film, which centers on the death and resurrection of a beloved pet, brings the story back to life 30 years after Disney had fired Burton for making a short version of the film deemed “too scary” for children. The black-and-white animation faithfully acknowledges Gothic’s cinematic history, and in an interview on the BBC News website Burton recalls his early identification with Frankenstein’s creature and Dracula on screen. This has an echo in *Frankenweenie*; as the BBC feature stresses, the film deals not only with loss and bereavement but “also touches on issues of making friends and finding your way in life” (Griffiths 2012). Gothic horror, then, can be didactic and confidence-building, a manual to individuation. The perceived homely qualities of the feature were underscored by *The Sunday Times* on 14 October 2012 which had a *Funday Times* pullout devoted to the film, with features including “Brain-teasing puzzles,” “fun science to do at home,” and the chance to win “10 fabulous, fun-packed, *Frankenweenie* goodie bags.” The second example was BBC Radio 4’s month-long focus on the Gothic Imagination, including new versions of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, with an aim of “reclaiming original gothic creations from the clichés they have become.” This refreshing endeavor did not appear to extend to the synopsis of Rebecca Lenkiewicz’s *Dracula*, however. It was billed as “a supernatural fable reflecting a harrowing fear of female sexuality, and the treatment meted out to the

insane pervert who unleashes it for pleasure.” The listener was promised an “all-action adventure story, with ghosts, ghouls, lunatics and seriously gripping chase scenes’, and that this two-hour adaptation would take its audience “on a thrilling ride through the dark psyche of Victorian England” (BBC Radio 4 2012). The novel reappraisal that is promised gives way to a series of old and long-familiar stereotypes of the Gothic: a theatrical supernaturalism, repressed female desire, perversity at once unleashed and punished, the guilty delights of exploring the murky depths of the past. This neatly illustrates Fred Botting’s remark that “If Gothic works tend to repeat a number of stock formulas, so does its criticism” (Botting 2001: 5).

These recent reanimations of modern Gothic typify not only its enduring appeal, but its self-consciousness and generic flexibility too: it is celebratory as much as it is transgressive, consumer-oriented and conformist as much as it is counter-cultural, a hybrid of “high” and “low” culture. Such attempts to refashion old tales to meet the needs of the present bear out Judith Halberstam’s claim that Gothic is a “consumptive genre which feeds parasitically upon other literary texts” (Halberstam 1995: 36). Arguably, too, Gothic preys upon audience desire and critical expectation. Whether or not Burton’s film or the radio plays lived up to their advance billing, there was a well-rehearsed expectation of what these versions of Gothic would deliver. Once the threatening invader of domestic stability, Gothic would seem to have become a familiar feature of modern life. It lives on through its re-readings, its ongoing capacity to generate interpretations within and beyond the academy. Mark Edmundson has noted how pervasively aspects of Gothic have seeped into critical theory: “Much, though surely not all, of what is called theory draws on Gothic idioms” (Edmundson 1997: 40). There is, perhaps, no Gothic without theory, and it is possible to argue that something “Gothic” has happened to theory as it has attempted to define, classify and conceptualize Gothic literature and culture across the last century.

Gothic has been theoretically aware from the outset: as Jerrold E. Hogle and Andrew Smith have observed, the contemporary proximity of Gothic and theory recalls the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Gothic was coming to prominence and “theory and the Gothic were so closely intertwined that they constantly fed into each other” (Hogle and Smith 2009: 2). The “origin” text of the Gothic tradition, Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, typifies this self-consciousness. Walpole’s Preface to the first edition of the novel in 1764 stresses the anachronistic nature of this found manuscript, which has been divorced from its original Neapolitan setting in two senses. Firstly, it was uncovered in the library of an “ancient catholic family in the north of England.” Secondly, while it was printed in 1529 and written in “pure Italian” around the same time – a period when letters flourished in Italy and served to “dispel the empire of superstition” – the tale depicts a barbaric world “in the darkest ages of Christianity,” and seems designed to confirm “the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions” (Walpole 1968: 39). The tale is not modernizing, and instead enables the recrudescence of a dark past: its moral is that “the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation” (Walpole 1968: 41). Yet, as Walpole’s Preface to the second edition in 1765 reveals, this sense of repetition might equally describe the novel’s counterfeit textual history. It is the eighteenth-century English present that visits these sins back on history. This Preface discloses the “real” genesis of the novel as an attempt to “blend the two

kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern” (Walpole 1968: 43). Modern romance is claimed to adhere strictly to “common life,” and to copy nature, rather than indulge in the imagination and improbability of previous romance tradition, and the novel tries to reconcile both these tendencies. Walpole had the opportunity to establish new rules, but is more pleased to imitate, “however faintly,” the example of Shakespeare (Walpole 1968: 48). Gothic thus begins as a repetition, a fabricated original, an invented history that masquerades as a return. Yet it also begins with conceptual questions about aesthetic form and taste, about verisimilitude and fantasy, and about how we read and write the past.

The focus of early twentieth-century studies of Gothic, such as Dorothy Scarborough’s *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (1917), Edith Birkhead’s *The Tale of Terror* (1921) and Eino Railo’s *The Haunted Castle* (1927), was mainly historical and thematic. These scholars sought to situate Gothic within a wider literary tradition and concentrated on the work of individual authors, practicing a literary history “whose concern was as much bibliographical and classificatory as it was hermeneutic” (Ellis 2000: 12). These pioneering works are psychoanalytically oriented to some degree: for example, Railo comments that early Gothic typically evokes the “sexual excitement of a neurasthenic subject” (Railo 1927: 281). Nonetheless, until the 1930s, scholarly opinion tended to conclude that Gothic was a minor offshoot of the novel tradition, and at best the preserve of antiquarian interest. This dismissive attitude is exemplified by the review of Railo’s book in the *TLS* on July 21, 1927, which observed that Gothic novels were no longer read, “except by students of origins and curios” (cited in Varma 1987: 1). J.M.S. Tompkins’s *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800* (1932) signals a shift in the status accorded to the Gothic, situating the English Gothic within the context of a wider European romance genre, particularly in relation to the “sickly German tragedies” that Wordsworth derided in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1802. Tompkins carefully identifies the generic settings and themes of Gothic, primarily by concentrating on Radcliffe’s fiction, and begins to exorcize what Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall term the “curse” of Wordsworth’s dismissive response (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 267). Tompkins is equivocal about the merits of Gothic, and its pretensions to invoke fear: she brusquely notes how Gothic novelists use artistic license to rid the tales of dirt and vermin, and concludes that “physical horror was not the emotion that the first Gothic romance-writers tried to raise” (Tompkins 1932: 272). She also makes clear that English Gothic is Protestant, and that it treats Catholicism as exotic but superstitious and irrational (Tompkins 1932: 274). Gothic in the 1790s can be read as

a natural reaction from a long period of sobriety in literature combined with revolutionary excitement and the growth of the reading habit in the lower middle classes to intensify the appeal of the terrible and increase the opportunities of gratifying it.

(Tompkins 1932: 221)

Although she grants Gothic seriousness of intent, Tompkins views Gothic as relatively chaste, sanitized and conservative, attuned to and serving its audience. This sense of Gothic’s commodification in a literary marketplace stands in marked contrast to subsequent accounts that stress its subversive or transformative power.

Montague Summers is the first critic to make claims for the value and significance of Gothic, portraying it as a form that transcends its historical conditions and generic constraints. In *The Gothic Quest* (1938) – a book that David Punter later pronounces “all but useless as an introduction to the Gothic” (Punter 1996: 15) – Summers argues that the Gothic acquired its popularity because it allowed an escape or refuge from “the troubles and carking cares of everyday life” (Summers 1964: 12–13). Yet Gothic was not merely a sedative: it was an “aristocrat of literature” and emanated from “a genuine spiritual impulse” (Summers 1964: 397, 399). Summers associates this lofty ambition with reactionary principles: “the great Gothic novelists abhorred and denounced political revolution,” and their fiction nostalgically rekindled the certainties of medieval faith. Despite considerable textual evidence to the contrary – early Gothic novels exhibit hostility toward tyrannical dynastic power and immorality located in southern, Catholic Europe – Summers contends that Gothic does not exhibit “any militant protestantism” (Summers 1964: 195). Summers’s tendentious account seeks to confirm the conservative character of Gothic, partly in response to the Surrealist André Breton’s claim in his 1936 “*Limites non-frontières du Surréalisme*” that the first Gothic novelists were revolutionary and anti-aristocratic, drawing on dream and fantasy to uncover the limits of Enlightenment reason. Devendra Varma’s *The Gothic Flame* (1957) positions itself rather curiously between these extremes of imaginative flight and premodern spirituality. Herbert Read (whose anthology *Surrealism* featured Breton’s essay) provides a foreword in which he claims that Varma has “rescued a dream literature from oblivion” (Varma 1987: viii), while Tompkins introduces the book, highlighting how it “sees the Gothic romance-writers as contributing to the recovery of the vision of a spiritual world behind material appearances” (Varma 1987: xii). Like its predecessors, Varma’s study identifies the staple features and literary antecedents of Gothic romance, yet it consistently evokes another realm, something that lies beyond the surface of the texts. Gothic “appeals to the night-side of the soul,” granting “a sense of infinity to our finite existence” and evoking in us “the same feelings that the Gothic cathedrals evoked in medieval man” (Varma 1987: 212). This mystical spirit expressed by religious artists and saints is reflected in Gothic fiction: “In an ecstasy of communion the Gothic spirit makes humble obeisance before the great Unknown: fear becomes acceptance, and senseless existence fraught with a dark, unfathomable, sacred purpose” (Varma 1987: 15). Varma’s Gothic serves a higher, visionary purpose, rather than seeking to satisfy more earthly appetites; its novelists “strike a union between our spiritual curiosities and venial terrors, and mediate between the world without us and the world within us” (Varma 1987: 212). Varma assumes the hauteur of Summers in emphasizing that this high-minded Gothic must be distinguished from “lower” variants of the genre that appealed to “the perverted taste for excitement among degenerate readers” (Varma 1987: 189).

These studies, although differing in their approaches and conclusions, foreground a recurrent set of questions about the Gothic: the attractions and dangers of its popularity, its conservative or revolutionary tendencies, the concern with psychological interiority and an ability to generate meanings that transcend its immediate historical context. Collectively, they accord Gothic a distinctive place and significance in literary history, and bestow it with critical respectability. In the last five decades, critics have grown increasingly confident in asserting the scope, quality and visionary

ambition of Gothic. As Gothic has taken on new forms, so criticism has diversified: the theoretical perspectives deployed to examine Gothic range from psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism and gender studies, through to new historicism, deconstruction, queer theory, post-colonialism, film theory and cultural studies. Hogle and Smith reflect that the Gothic “revival” of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been due in part to its generic fluidity and dynamism, but also to “the advances in theorizing about literature and culture” that have transformed Gothic into a mainstream critical concern (Hogle and Smith 2009: 1). Gothic can be seen as an instigator of theoretical discourse rather than the passive object of critical enquiry, and the “explosion in multiple approaches to the Gothic” in the last three decades has led to “new theorisings of Gothic *and* a re-Gothicising of theory” (Hogle and Smith 2009: 4). If it is associated with excess, then it is the excess of meanings identified by Judith Halberstam, who observes that in Gothic novels, “multiple interpretations are embedded in the text and part of the experience of horror comes from the realization that meaning itself runs riot” (Halberstam 1995: 2).

It is in this move to the interior, the privileging of transgression, and the general surrender to the lure of meaning that lies “beyond” the text that has, in the view of some, fatally weakened theories of the Gothic. Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall contend that “Gothic criticism has abandoned any credible historical grasp upon its object, which it has tended to reinvent in the image of its own projected intellectual goals of psychological ‘depth’ and political ‘subversion’” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 267–68). In their bracing account, Baldick and Mighall highlight the ways in which contemporary theory has turned Gothic into a playground for its own desires or political aspirations. In the manner of the Gothic interloper or uninvited guest, theory intrudes, appropriating Gothic for its own ends. Yet, as we have already seen, Gothic begins by purloining the past and inventing its origins, so is it a form whose very nature invites reappropriation? To read Gothic in terms of surface or depth, to view it as safe or threatening, to treat it as entirely a product of its own time or as capable of speaking afresh to new audiences: these are the stakes of Gothic theory.

In the later twentieth century, the tendency has been to celebrate Gothic as a scandalous and transgressive psychosexual arena of forbidden desires and excess that threatens bourgeois order. David Punter’s landmark *The Literature of Terror*, originally published in 1980, proposes that the abiding feature of Gothic is fear: to explore Gothic is to explore the ways in which “terror breaks through the surfaces of literature” (Punter 1996: 18). Terror here denotes that sense of awe and elevated feeling associated by Edmund Burke with the sublime, and not just incapacitating horror. A substantial number of critics embrace this terror and imbue it with revolutionary potential. Kenneth W. Graham asserts that “the Gothic experience grows out of prohibition” (Graham 1989: viii), and “The transgression of order and reason is central to the essential subversiveness of the Gothic experience” (Graham 1989: 260). Such a view recalls early debates about Gothic, both in terms of its generic status (such as its relation to the romance tradition) and its challenge (or otherwise) to moral standards (Hogle and Smith 2009: 3). Critics deplored “the corrupting effects of depraved, sensational and feminised fiction” (Botting 1999: 23) and the immature, base appetites it stimulated. However, Gothic’s perceived deviancy appeared to feed its popularity. The imposition of standards or norms grew steadily more difficult as the Gothic skirted the boundaries between popular entertainment

and serious-minded art across the nineteenth century, transmuting into a myriad of cultural forms such as sensation fiction, popular theater and shilling shockers. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, this proliferation has grown exponentially, with Gothic surfacing in film, television, advertising, fashion, computer gaming and children's toys. Like the initial reactions to Gothic, later theoretical responses have also revolved around questions of sexuality, gender and the popular, and how a putatively transgressive cultural form can enjoy and sustain mainstream acceptance. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's qualification that Gothic is "an aesthetic of *pleasurable fear*" (Sedgwick 1986: vi; emphasis added), may propose one answer: Gothic constitutes a site of managed affect, offering indulgence and gratification rather than genuinely unsettling or discomfiting its audience. One year after the publication of Punter's study, Rosemary Jackson had trenchantly argued that Gothic fiction "tended to buttress a dominant, bourgeois ideology, by vicarious wish fulfilment through fantasies of incest, rape, murder, parricide, social disorder" (Jackson 1981: 175). As Fred Botting reflects, transgression and prohibition in Gothic are interdependent: "While Gothic fictions are presented as shamelessly indulging illicit desires and excessive passions, they simultaneously serve the interests of a system of power, reinvigorating its surveillance, bolstering its discipline, reinforcing its vigilant attention to limits" (Botting 1999: 27). For Baldick and Mighall, the privileging of Gothic's revolutionary force is modern critical wish fulfilment; Gothic texts are at best "tamely humanitarian" (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 285).

Robert Miles detects a "nexus" of psychoanalytic, feminist and materialist perspectives in Gothic theory, modes of enquiry that examine questions of power and subjectivity. They demonstrate "broad agreement that the Gothic represents the subject in a state of deracination, of the self finding itself dispossessed in its own house in a condition of rupture, disjunction, fragmentation" (Miles 2002: 3). Psychoanalytic approaches focus on the interior landscape traversed by Gothic, encouraged by the prevalence of vaults, dungeons, subterranean chambers and passages, buried or concealed family secrets and uncanny phenomena. William Patrick Day argues that Gothic "investigates the dynamics of that inner life, those phenomena we call states of mind and modes of consciousness"; the recurrence of dream and nightmare obliges the reader to read symbolically, and to enter a Gothic "underworld" (Day 1985: 180–81). For Coral Ann Howells, Gothic "represents the darker side of awareness, the side to which sensibility and imagination belong, together with those less categorizable areas of guilt, fear and madness," projecting "a peculiarly fraught fantasy world of neurosis and morbidity" (Howells 1995: 5). Gothic texts are not merely symptomatic expressions of unconscious desires and anxieties, but, like the analytic session, they perform a therapeutic function by staging and managing this "fraught" inner world: Gothic novelists "create a fictional world which embodied their fears and fantasies and offered a retreat from insoluble problems, while at the same time it rendered their fears ultimately harmless by containing and distancing them in a fantasy" (Howells 1995: 7). Thus, rather than releasing forbidden or transgressive appetites, Gothic contains them within generic and moral conventions.

Yet to what extent is psychoanalysis the "master" discourse and Gothic the case study, particularly if they can be regarded as "coeval" narratives that "both begin to take shape around the end of the eighteenth century" (Miles 1995: 108)? Day

describes the Gothic and psychoanalysis as “cousins” with a common purpose: “The Gothic arises out of the immediate needs of the reading public to . . . articulate and define the turbulence of their psychic existence. We may see Freud as the intellectual counterpart of this process” (Day 1985: 179). Anne Williams argues that Gothic and psychoanalysis share a “common cultural matrix,” and “Instead of using Freud to read Gothic, we should use Gothic to read Freud” (Williams 1995: 243). As she observes, Freud’s theory of the mind conceives of the self as a haunted house, and he uses architectural metaphors to describe the structure of the psyche (Williams 1995: 244). Thus Gothic may be seen to prefigure Freud, furnishing him with a ready-made topography of murky depths and exorbitant tendencies: psychoanalysis becomes “an effect of 150 years of monster-making” (Botting 2001: 5). Even the uncanny, that ubiquitous, hardy perennial of Gothic criticism over the last few decades, can be historicized as an effect of modernity, “invented” in the eighteenth century as a critique of the Enlightenment production of knowledge, rather than a survival of human prehistory (Castle 1987: 5). Terry Castle has argued that Ann Radcliffe’s ghosts are “symptomatic projections of modern psychic life,” an “effect of the images pervading the culture, subject and history of modernity” (Castle 1987: 237). In this light, Freud’s fascination with mental apparitions and the demonic is also a product of Romantic sensibility. It seems clear that psychoanalytic theory is fundamentally indebted to Gothic motifs and narrative strategies, but to treat their relationship as a struggle for priority or hermeneutic supremacy is to reproduce the Oedipal family drama. Since psychoanalysis and Gothic share common points of reference and origin, it may be more profitable to think of their relationship as trans-ferential, each implicated in the story that the other tells.

Feminist readings of the Gothic can be read as following a similar pattern. In *The Literature of Terror*, David Punter commented that it was no accident that many of the most important Gothic writers are women and, perhaps unsurprisingly, feminist theory had made one of the “most energetic” contributions to Gothic criticism. It can even be claimed that feminist literary criticism “rescued Gothic studies” (Fitzgerald 2004: 9). Ellen Moers’s concept of the female Gothic, “the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic” (Moers 1985: 90), has been highly influential for feminist criticism, but it also illustrates how theory becomes gothicized. A volume such as Juliann Fleenor’s *The Female Gothic* (1987) understands the female Gothic as an expression of women’s dis-ease in a patriarchal culture: this condition of identity, consciously or unconsciously, controls the constitutive features of the form, and leads to recurrent images of enclosure and imprisonment that symbolize the repressive society in which the female writer lives. Moers’s female Gothic has been critiqued, however, for accepting a biologically based dichotomy (Howard 1994: 57) and presuming an “essentialist link between the biological sex of the writer and the ‘gender’ of the text” (Fitzgerald 2004: 11). Alongside this hesitation about its gender essentialism, Diane Long Hoeveler has argued that female Gothic as a category inaugurates “victim” feminism, with its heroines masquerading their innocent helplessness in the face of patriarchal oppression while utilizing that “weakness” to triumph over such coercion (Hoeveler 1998). As such, feminist theory “participates in the very fantasies” that Gothic produces (Hoeveler 1998: 3). Historicizing accounts have also reassessed the narrative propounded by female Gothic. E.J. Clery

has shown how Gothic women writers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are preoccupied with questions of imaginative autonomy, audiences, and the economics of authorship, rather than the exposure of the oppressive constraints of patriarchal family structures (Clery 2000).

Such contextualization challenges assumptions about the female readership and authorship of Gothic in a brief period when the feminization of ideas about language, literature and creativity increased the visibility and acceptance of women writers (Howard 1994: 67–97). Thus we might regard the female Gothic as a product of its own historical moment, a contribution to the second phase of Anglo-American feminist literary criticism that sought to recover a lost tradition of women’s literature (Fitzgerald 2004: 8–9). Yet does this necessarily limit its critical purchase? It is possible to discern historical parallels between early Gothic women writers and critics of the female Gothic: they are complementary endeavors which actively question not just the restrictions of patriarchy and normative family structures, but also the nature of female authorship and visibility in culture. Equally, it is impossible in both moments to homogenize women in terms of ideology, social status and writing practices: just as there are multiple, and often conflicting, feminisms in the present day, so there were points of agreement and fundamental difference between a “Jacobin” feminist like Mary Wollstonecraft and a social conservative such as Hannah More, particularly in the 1790s. It may be worth retaining the female Gothic as a term partly as a corrective to the gender blindness of earlier critical accounts (Smith and Wallace 2004: 6), but as a practice it also discloses a deeper socio-economic history. Feminist literary criticism highlights the centrality of property to Gothic – a fascination of post-Enlightenment culture in general – and implicitly acknowledges its own involvement in this “property plot.” In her identification with pioneering women writers, Moers not only charted a path for a subsequent generation of feminist critics, but she also carried on the struggles of female novelists over the textual space of the Gothic, as Lauren Fitzgerald has suggested (Fitzgerald 2004: 13). Although this could lead to a questionable tale of Gothic “heroines” and male “villains” in fiction and criticism, this theoretical tradition recognizes that Gothic is not a passive object of study: Moers and others do not just examine the female Gothic, they become part of its ongoing history.

Materialist approaches of course center on the “property plot,” recognizing that Gothic is “a bourgeois genre” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 285), and that “Monstrosity (and the fear it gives rise to) is historically conditioned rather than a psychological universal” (Halberstam 1995: 6). As Baldick and Mighall contend, “others” represent new market opportunities rather than fearsome difference for the true bourgeois, and Gothic criticism projects the fantasy of a terrified bourgeoisie out of “vengeful frustration” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 284). As with psychoanalysis and feminism, however, Marxist perspectives are not immune to Gothic effects: not least *The Communist Manifesto*. Its opening lines announce that “a spectre is haunting Europe,” a specter capable of transforming the present, not a remnant of the outmoded past. Modern bourgeois society resembles the “sorcerer” who is “no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.” By unleashing these forces, the bourgeoisie becomes its own “gravedigger” and its rule is overthrown: one of the benefits of the proletariat’s victory will be the disappearance of the bourgeois family unit as site of exploitation (Marx and Engels

1992: 2, 8, 16, 22–23). Nonetheless, even though it is doomed, Marx and Engels present the bourgeoisie as an iconoclastic and revolutionary force. The Manifesto charts the vertiginous ability of capitalism to ceaselessly destroy and reinvent itself, constantly on the cusp between novelty and obsolescence, and variously tolerating, policing or terminating its others. Thus this foundational Marxist vision draws on an extensive Gothic repertoire: tyranny, supernaturalism, transgression, uncanny returns and unpredictable appetites.

Franco Moretti's treatment of Gothic's most enduring monsters captures the instability and conflicted nature of capitalism: Frankenstein's monster and Dracula sum up "The fear of bourgeois civilization" (Moretti 1983: 83). They represent the extremes – "the disfigured wretch and the ruthless proprietor" – of capitalist society, and Gothic "is born precisely *out of the terror of a split society*, and out of the desire to heal it" (Moretti 1983: 83, emphasis in text). In *Frankenstein* (1818), the creature is the proletariat: an artificial and collectivized creature, a monstrous assemblage of disparate parts that is "not found in nature, but built" (*ibid.*: 86). Moretti sees the deforming of the creature as analogous to the deforming effects of alienated labor in capitalist society, a representation "of how things really were" in the early decades of the industrial revolution (Moretti 1983: 87). Victor Frankenstein is his own gravedigger: he has created a monster that cannot be controlled. Dracula, by contrast, is a monopoly capitalist, one who brooks no competition. He is the (undead) embodiment of capitalism, sucking the blood of the living, impelled like capitalism "towards a continuous growth, an unlimited expansion of his domain: accumulation is inherent in his nature" (Moretti 1983: 91). The Count represents unashamed capital, a capital that can expand endlessly without restraint. Yet, since monopolistic concentration is less pronounced in turn-of-the-century Britain than in other advanced societies, he must be portrayed as a foreign threat (Moretti 1983: 93). The vampire-hunters must demonstrate that money must be harnessed to good, moral ends, rather than functioning as an end in itself. This is

the great ideological lie of Victorian capitalism, a capitalism which is ashamed of itself and which hides factories and stations beneath cumbrous Gothic superstructures; which prolongs and extols aristocratic models of life; which exalts the holiness of the family as the latter begins secretly to break up.

(Moretti 1983: 94)

In fighting Dracula, the vampire-hunters want to arrest history; as such, *they* are "the relics of the dark ages," not the Count" (Moretti 1983: 94).

As this survey suggests, psychoanalysis, feminism and Marxism share an assumption that, in Gothic texts, bourgeois society is beset by fears and conflicts that cannot be fully resolved, or can be uttered only symptomatically. Baldick and Mighall term this the "anxiety model," which rests on "the doubtful assumption" that Gothic represents "supposedly widespread and deeply felt 'fears' which troubled the middle classes at the time" (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 279). Kelly Hurley's view that Gothic interprets and refigures "unmanageable realities for its audience" (Hurley 1996: 5), particularly at the *fin-de-siècle* period, exemplifies this tendency. As Baldick and Mighall point out, however, if Gothic fiction has a generic obligation to frighten, it may be an unlikely index of general cultural anxiety (Baldick and Mighall 2012:

280). The belief of Gothic criticism in “the infinite modes of bourgeois anxiety” makes Count Dracula, *par excellence*, a figure that can be fashioned retrospectively to serve numerous critical perspectives: “The vampire itself has become a cipher, merely the vehicle for the desires and agendas of modern critical discourse, and the pretext for the latest Gothic melodrama to be enacted” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 281). They suggest, provocatively, that in Gothic literature Victorians are more anxious about the arrival of an enlightened future (as represented by emancipated contemporary criticism) than they are about the recrudescence of a primitive past. Dracula and his kindred have certainly become an inexhaustible source of fascination for Gothic theory across the last century, but as we shall see, the vampire has not been read exclusively as a subversive figure. Ken Gelder has traced how the vampire functions as metaphor in differing historical contexts, geopolitical settings and cultural forms through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Francis Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992) exemplifies the multiple ways in which the vampire can be read in a specific historical moment: the film was released in the midst of ethnic conflicts in the Balkans – the warlord Dracula’s “original” territory – but also invited readings in terms of the AIDS epidemic. Moreover, as Gelder observes, Coppola also locates the Count in the spectral realm of early film technology, acknowledging that the vampire has been constantly reanimated by cinema (Gelder 1994: 87). The vampire is an enabling resource as much as it is a recurrent anxiety.

The continued currency of the vampire suggests that it finds modernity hospitable, but this sense of belonging is precisely at issue in Stoker’s novel, which simultaneously welcomes the future and longs to retreat onto old and long-familiar ground. In its composition, *Dracula* is self-consciously modern, its assembled narratives compiled via diary entries, newspaper cuttings, shorthand, letters, official records and new writing technologies (the typewriter, telegrams, shorthand, the phonograph). The text speaks with the multivalent voice of a modernity that arrays itself against the vampire’s threat, yet it cannot seem to choose, finally, between science and the occult (Hurley 1996: 20). Science and the bureaucratic state combine to kill the vampire, but Dracula – whether as outlandish anachronism, unapologetic vestige of “ancient supernaturalism” (Ellis 2000: 195), return of the repressed or figure of ambiguous sexuality – can readily navigate modernity. As Markman Ellis suggests, knowledge of tradition and superstition serve the vampire-hunters well and, arguably, “the supernatural discourses of folklore win out” (Ellis 2000: 193, 198). This oscillation between tradition and novelty extends to Lucy and Mina: neither of these New Women can be contained within a discourse of “romance” and sexual convention, even if the novel vigorously attempts to impose a marital norm. They represent two sides of the same coin: “perverse” sexual independence, and the confident professionalism that is indispensable in an advanced capitalist society. In summary, the vampire is not solely the champion of modern Enlightenment, nor the menacing resurgence of a dark past. Gothic criticism does not necessarily impose “progressive” values on this late-nineteenth-century text: the potential for liberation, albeit muted or resisted, is already there. Baldick and Mighall claim that Dracula’s attraction for Gothic criticism “resides less in what he is – a vampire – than in what he is not – ‘Victorian’ ” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 281). Yet he *is* Victorian, in that he is a vindication of modernity but also a recognition of its costs and contradictory legacies.

As if to signal that the clutches of atavism have finally been thrown off, Dracula crumbles to dust at the end of the novel, but he has enjoyed a rich afterlife in literature and popular culture across the last century. Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976–2003) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Whedon 1997–2003) have been followed by a raft of vampire films in the new century, including the *Blade* (1998–2004) and *Underworld* (2003–12) series, *Van Helsing* (Sommers 2004), and the final (perhaps) cinematic installment of the *Twilight* franchise was released in late 2012. In view of this vigorous bloodline, is the vampire, like the Gothic more widely, the lingering half-presence that shadows technological innovation and the proliferating forms of modern culture, or the irrepressible *product* of that modernity? As Catherine Spooner remarks, Gothic has spread like “a malevolent virus” across disciplinary boundaries and to all parts of contemporary culture, establishing itself as “mainstream entertainment” (Spooner 2006: 8, 25). While critics still invest it with subversive potential, this marginal genre is big business: “Above all, Gothic sells” (Spooner 2006: 23). This marketability ensures its continued appeal to critical theory, which in turns gathers energy from Gothic: it can be relied upon “to fulfil whatever cultural or critical need arises at any given time” (Spooner 2006: 155). Early in the new millennium, Fred Botting surmised that Gothic has become so familiar that it seems “incapable of shocking anew,” revealing not the dark underside of modernity but the emptiness at the heart of consumer culture (Botting 2001: 134). Yet, while contemporary Gothic can be critiqued, like postmodernism, as being concerned only with surfaces and commodification, it can also be seen to remain preoccupied with material concerns “such as poverty, race and sexual discrimination” (Armitt 2011: 152). In its blend of innovation, inauthenticity and recapitulation, the present assumes the countenance of Walpole's pseudo-Gothic castle Strawberry Hill. Yet, as Walpole's foundation myth epitomizes, Gothic does not embrace the future unreflectively. In Gothic texts, products and lifestyles, reminders of other places and times return constantly, always viewed through the lens of our current concerns. Theoretical approaches must remain similarly capable of ceaseless reinvention, telling old tales differently, at once indulging and resisting the invitation of Gothic.

REFERENCES

- Armitt, L. (2011) *Twentieth-Century Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Baldick, C. and Mighall, R. (2012) “Gothic Criticism,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 267–87.
- BBC Radio 4 (2012) “The Gothic Imagination.” Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01n9whk>> (accessed October 12, 2012).
- Birkhead, E. (1921) *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance*, London: Constable.
- Botting, F. (1999) “The Gothic Production of the Unconscious,” in G. Byron and D. Punter (eds) *Spectral Readings: Towards a Gothic Geography*, London: Macmillan: 11–36.
- (2001) “Preface” and “Candygothic” in F. Botting (ed.) *The Gothic*, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer: 1–6, 133–51.
- Castle, T. (1987) *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Clery, E.J. (2000) *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley*, Tavistock: Northcote.
- Day, W.P. (1985) *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Edmundson, M. (1997) *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sodomasochism, and the Culture of Gothic*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ellis, M. (2000) *The History of Gothic Fiction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Fitzgerald, L. (2004) "Female Gothic and the Institutionalization of Gothic Studies," *Gothic Studies*, 6.1: 8–18.
- Fleenor, J. (ed.) (1987) *The Female Gothic*, Montreal: Eden Press.
- Gelder, K. (1994) *Reading the Vampire*, London: Routledge.
- Graham, K.W. (1989) "Preface" and "Emily's Demon-Lover: The Gothic Revolution and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," in K.W. Graham (ed.) *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression*, New York: AMS Press: xiii–xvii, 163–72.
- Griffiths, S. (2012) "Tim Burton: 'I've never made a scary movie,'" online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-19923076>> (accessed October 17, 2012.)
- Halberstam, J. (1995) *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hoeveler, D.L. (1998) *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Hogle, J.E. and Smith, A. (2009) "Revisiting the Gothic and Theory: An Introduction," *Gothic Studies*, 11.1: 1–8.
- Howard, J. (1994) *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Howells, C.A. (1995) *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*, 1978, London: Athlone.
- Hurley, K. (1996) *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, R. (1981) *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, London: Methuen.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1992) *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, eds S. Moore and D. McLellan, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miles, R. (1995) *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (2002) *Gothic Writing 1750–1820: A Genealogy*, 2nd edn, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Moers, E. (1985) *Literary Women*, 1976, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moretti, F. (1983) *Signs Taken for Wonders*, trans. S. Fischer, D. Forgacs and D. Miller, London: Verso.
- Punter, D. (1996) *The Literature of Terror Vol. 1: The Gothic Tradition*, 2nd edn, London: Longman.
- Railo, E. (1927) *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*, London: Routledge.
- Scarborough, D. (1917) *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction*, New York: Putnam.
- Sedgwick, E.K. (1986) *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, New York: Methuen.
- Smith, A. and Wallace, D. (2004) "The Female Gothic: Then and Now," *Gothic Studies*, 6.1: 1–7.
- Spooner, C. (2006) *Contemporary Gothic*, London: Reaktion Books.
- Summers, M. (1964) *The Gothic Quest*, 1938, New York: Russell and Russell.

- Tompkins, J.M.S. (1932) *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800*, London: Constable.
- Varma, D. (1987) *Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, 1957*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press.
- Walpole, H. (1968) *The Castle of Otranto, 1764*, in P. Fairclough (ed.) *Three Gothic Novels*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Williams, A. (1995) *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

PART IV

GOTHIC SPECTACLE



This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

GOTHIC AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VISUAL ART



Martin Myrone

The visuality of the Gothic is now a well-established critical theme. The Gothic is, ineradicably, an architectural term, and even if the Gothic novel and the revival of Gothic styles in architecture are “now very rarely discussed as parts of a whole cultural movement” (Charlesworth 2002: 5), the characteristic ornamental and spatial features of Gothic (and Gothic revival) architecture permeate many manifestations of the Gothic in other media – whether literally, decoratively, metaphorically or still more tangentially. However carefully delineated this may be from the taste for Gothic forms and the polemics of Gothic revivalists, the towering spaces and pointed arches of medieval architecture are yet likely to resurface in our minds. In more general ways, the realization or frustration of visual experience seems to sit at the heart of Gothic literary conventions. And if the Gothic is allowed to have any application beyond a specific and defined arc of literary activity (classically, from Horace Walpole to Charles Maturin, so c.1760–1820), we can admit that the translation of Gothic tropes into photography and fashion, and above all cinema, and onward into the digital age, has been generally fluent, even effortless. The Gothic in its multitude of trans-medial manifestations turns on the making visible of horror: the skeleton jumping out of a closet, the curtain drawn back, the flash-light that fleetingly illuminates an unspeakable scene of incest and/or cannibalism, the opened mouth revealing fangs or the scarred stump in place of a tongue. But even so, the traditional fine arts – painting, drawing, sculpture and engraving – have not figured largely in modern accounts of the Gothic, at least as the central object of analysis. Although a few iconic images – perhaps, above all, Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg’s *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard* (1790) (see Figure 28.2), Henry Fuseli’s *The Nightmare* (1783) (see Figure 28.4) and certain of the etchings of dungeons by Piranesi (see Figure 28.5) – have been used repeatedly on dust covers and as incidental illustrations, they have only very rarely been addressed from within the literature on the Gothic as anything more than adjuncts.

There are exceptions. The German literary scholar Jürgen Klein has interwoven visual and textual analysis in a succession of articles and books on “Dark Romanticism” (Klein 1985; Klein 1991; Klein 2005; Klein 2011). Commentators on

contemporary Gothic art and culture have readily evoked a few key reference points in the visual arts of the past, notably Fuseli and Goya (see for example Grunenberg 1997). Parallels between visual and literary art in late-eighteenth-century Britain were proposed by a few studies of the mid-twentieth century, notably Ruthven Todd's pioneering *Tracks in the Snow* which fleetingly proposed that "The time of Henry Fuseli was the time of . . . the Gothic Novel and Strawberry Hill . . . of Monk Lewis flavouring terror with indecency as Sade used horror as a wrapper for obscenity" (Todd 1946: 62). But when Sarah Burns proposes, in *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America*, that a succession of American painters produced "Gothic pictures" as "meditations on haunting and being haunted: by personal demons, social displacement (or misplacement), or the omnipresent specter of slavery and race" (Burns 2004: xix) she also distinguishes



Figure 28.1 Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97). *A Philosopher by Lamplight* (exhibited 1769)

this nineteenth-century American art-historical phenomenon from its eighteenth-century precursors, and while noting that “The literature on Gothic is vast” can point only to two much more general and relatively old studies, Hugh Honour’s *Romanticism* and Morton D. Paley’s *The Apocalyptic Sublime*, as recommended readings on the visual (Burns 2004: 249–50; Paley 1986).

Things may have shifted further in the last few years, as part, perhaps, of the much-vaunted “pictorial turn” in intellectual and cultural life at the end of the twentieth century (Mitchell 1994). The visual has come more forcibly under analysis within Gothic Studies via the probing of the technologies of display and the material conditions of aesthetic experience, arguably part of a larger re-orientation of the Gothic in relation to Romantic studies (Gamer 2000; D’Arcy Wood 2001; Miles 2005; Thomas 2008; Jones 2011). The attention given to the culture of spectacle, in the technology-driven special shows such as the Eidophusikon, Phantasmagoria and magic lantern shows, but also in viewing art exhibitions as forms of spectacle too, allows us to see a continuum of visual experiences between the high and low realms in what David Jones recently summarized as “a complex mesh of intense trans-medial energies” (Jones 2011). The revised second edition of Marie Mulvey-Roberts’s *The Handbook of Gothic Literature* (1998), published under the tellingly more expansive new title of *The Handbook of the Gothic* (2009), was altered to take account of the increased “interdisciplinarity” of the field, with new entries representing an expansion into “other disciplines such as art, film, photography, cyberpunk”. The short entry on “Gothic Art” by the artist Graham Ovenden and carried over from the first edition highlights several key exponents of a “dark” tradition of art which arose with late-eighteenth-century Gothicism – Fuseli and Goya pre-eminently – surviving into the “prismatic” nineteenth century to resurge in the darkness of the modern age (Ovenden 2009). Fuseli’s name crops up again in an entry on “Nightmare” (Martin 2009), and there are scattered allusions to William Blake and J.M.W. Turner and other visual artists from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. David Punter and Glennis Byron similarly name-check Fuseli and Goya in the few paragraphs on “Gothic Art” in their overview, *The Gothic* (Punter and Byron 2004: 36–37). But this still represents slim pickings, and the default position within Gothic Studies is to refer to textual materials. So while the entry on Gothic in the *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age* promises that what “began as a term of abuse, turned into a fashion, and gave rise to a modern sense of history, influencing on the way every branch of the arts from architecture, to painting, sculpture and literature” (McCalman 1999), the index only provides references to Gothic “architecture,” “design,” “drama” and, most extensively, “novels,” all apparently located outside the essays on “Viewing,” “Prints” and “Painting.”

If it is not hard to identify a few iconic images which we might claim, from their common use as illustrational materials if nothing else, constitute a recognizable “Gothic Art,” these have not been much interrogated as images or from an art-historical angle. In this chapter, I seek to address those familiar reference points from two, apparently conflicting, perspectives: thinking about these paintings and prints within the larger history of Gothic visuality, a maneuver which might seem to subsume these materials in a much larger and more diverse body of images, environments and textual practices; and consider the specificity of these materials as “fine art,” as a category of cultural production more self-consciously removed in the late

eighteenth century from the wider realm (by virtue of powerful theoretical frameworks around aesthetics, and by the institutional mechanisms of academic art practice and exhibition: see Eagleton 1990; Mattick 1993; Brewer 1997). I would argue that both maneuvers are necessary to apprehend the particular (tense) character of the interplay between Gothic and the visual arts defined in this narrower sense. If Gothic literature often sought out legitimating strategies, in deploying Shakespearean language, historical settings and the evocation of landscape aesthetics, fine art was similarly often distanced from Gothic literature and the taint it carried. The trans-medial mapping across material and generic boundaries which a consideration of the larger field of Gothic cultural production may invite needs, arguably, to be allied to a simultaneous exploration of the hierarchical organization of high and low cultures, the dynamic oppositions and exclusions which structure cultural value.

In this regard the most important, and very straightforward, observation which needs to be made is that there are really very few paintings or independent prints (as opposed to book illustrations) dating from the eighteenth century which refer directly and unequivocally to Gothic source materials. The walls of the Royal Academy exhibition in London, or of the Salon of Paris, and the drawers of high-class print-shops in Berlin or Boston – the places where an idea of “high art” was given shape and disseminated – were simply not flooded in the later eighteenth century with paintings and engravings professing to be based on Gothic literary sources, despite the huge commercial (and sometimes critical) success of such literary productions in the world at large.

At the broadest level of cultural interpretation, art historians have traditionally traced a shift from the “classical” to the “Romantic” within European culture in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, which arguably opened up possibilities for a Gothic visuality. The reappraisal of the “sublime” landscape, involving a new recognition of the allure of horror and terror in aesthetic terms, is well-established (Monk 1960), and underpins, in particular, the appeal to landscape imagery in the writings of Ann Radcliffe. But there is a dual action at work here. If the appeal to extensive, and sometimes overpowering, landscapes draws landscape aesthetics into the Gothic novel, it does so as part of a legitimizing strategy, and one which threatens to take the novel away from the Gothic genre altogether (Chard 1999: xxi; Castle 1998: ix). Meanwhile, landscape painting itself appears only very rarely to have alluded to Gothic literary sources, a rare exception being Nathaniel Grogan’s painted illustration to Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1790s; National Gallery of Ireland). The multitude of banditti and soldiers in landscapes evocative of Italy and the romantic Alps appearing in paintings by artists including John Hamilton Mortimer and Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg were overwhelmingly of a more generic kind.

There are examples of paintings which feature landscape settings with more particular Gothic resonances, even if they are not related to specific texts. De Loutherbourg’s *Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard* (1790) (Figure 28.2) and Joseph Wright of Derby’s *The Hermit* (1769) exhibit some fairly obvious iconographic and formal characteristics which we could readily relate to the literary Gothic. Recommending the purchase of the first picture to the wealthy collector Paul Mellon in 1974, the architectural historian John Harris noted that “to my mind it epitomizes the whole aspect of the Gothic novel” (quoted in Myrone 2005: 108). In both pictures there is the dominating gloom of the scene – we might say a Walpoleian

gloomth such is the suggestion of damp darkness. The interest in lunar and artificial illusion, and the obscurity which reigns outside of its reach, connects these pictures with the magic lantern spectacle or “technology-driven entertainment” which features so dynamically in the wider visual culture of the late eighteenth century (Baugh 2007). The dominant figure in each is robed in vaguely classical, vaguely medieval costumes, and might be taken for a wizard or a monk, a hermit or a wandering philosopher. With de Louthembourg’s picture there is, very obviously, the architectural setting which, as both pointed Gothic and as ruin, connects with contemporary medievalizing tendencies in architecture and ornament (the “Gothick” or early Gothic revival), but also Gothic literature with its preoccupations with superstition and ruination (Charlesworth 2002; Kennedy 2001: 504). With the Wright we might instead pay particular attention to the mystifying disjunction

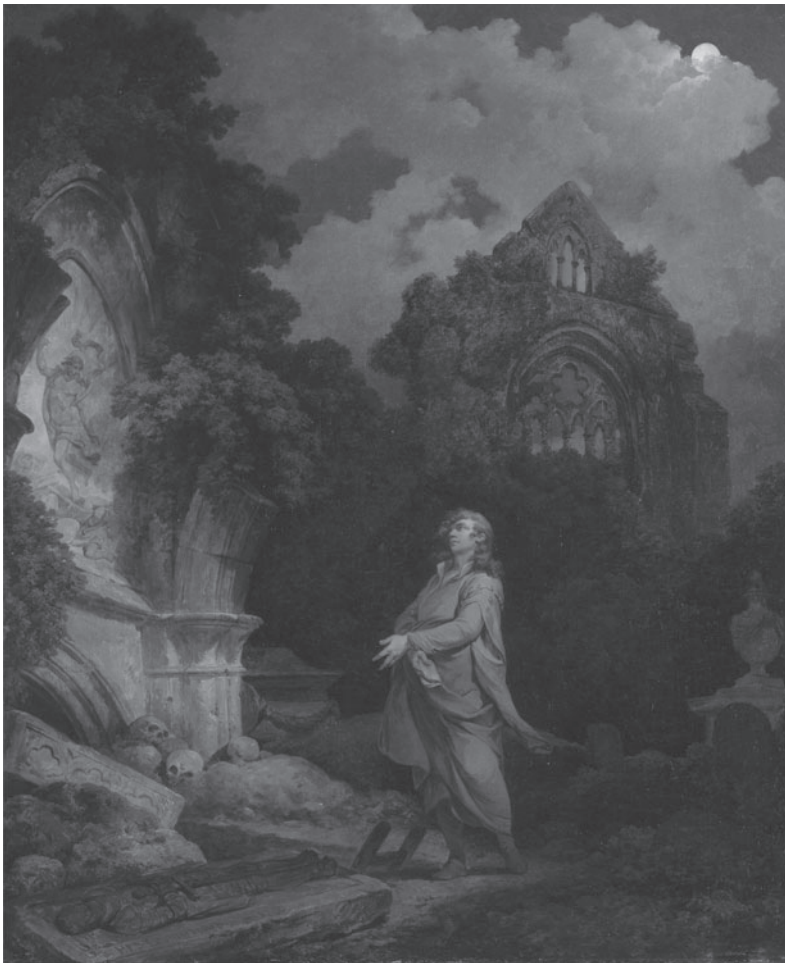


Figure 28.2 Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740–1812). *A Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard* (1790)

between the scale of the old hermit in the cave and the two male figures approaching him from the right, apparently adult but only hobbit-sized. The result is a disorientating shift comparable to the abrupt and disorientating narrative junctures in Gothic literary form and perhaps also deliberately evocative of the (to modern eyes weird) effects of medieval art (Myrone 2006: 102; Leach and Manby 2012: 42). It may yet be that a specific literary reference will be recognized which “explains” these two pictures, as has been the case with another painting by Wright, *Breaking Open the Tomb of His Ancestor* (1772, Derby City Art Gallery), now known to be based on a particular Orientalist-Gothic text (Lock 1999; Barker 2009: 52 n.160). But even if such apparent resolution is achieved, we are left with the struggle which has taken us there: an interpretative struggle with obscurity and shifting meanings which has distinctively Gothic implications.

Both these images belong to the category of subject painting, much encouraged and cultivated by the development of public art exhibitions and a wider culture of urban spectacle from the 1760s. While elsewhere in Europe art shows had been under the aegis of the state, church or guilds, in Britain they were commercially driven and, necessarily, market-orientated. They were the major showcase for artists seeking patronage and critical support. With the upsurge in cultural participation which defines eighteenth-century politeness (Brewer 1997), combining with the intense competitiveness of the artistic field, artists were obliged to innovate, to find new subject matter and ways of making art which appealed to a more socially diverse spectatorship. Among those innovations was a new approach to narrative painting, one which placed spectacular visual effect and emotional involvement far above moralizing content, or even legibility (Myrone 2006). This tendency can be detected in the realms of portraiture and landscape painting (Solkin 2001), but it is in relation to narrative subject painting that the consequences are most relevant from the perspective of the history of the Gothic.

In 1783 Horace Walpole, no less, wrote a complaining note in the margins of his copy of that year’s Royal Academy exhibition catalogue: “Of late, Barry, Romney, Fuseli, Mrs Cosway & others have attempted to paint Deities, Visions, Witchcraft &c, but have only been bombast & extravagant, without true dignity.” Over several years, Walpole was to complain that “mad,” “shocking” and “shockingly mad” pictures were beginning to appear at public exhibitions (Myrone 2006: 35), most notoriously those of the Swiss-born artist Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). He, above all other artists, was then (and thereafter) to be identified with the excesses and shock-tactics of the Gothic. It was no accident that when the satirical artist James Gillray wanted cruelly to satirize Gothic reading habits, he did so by, among other things, including a distinctly Fuselian painting among the horrid domestic ornaments disfiguring the fashionable drawing-room setting of his print, *Tales of Wonder!* (1802) (see Figure 15.1). The ghost in James Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest*, the 1794 stage adaptation of Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), was knowingly based on a painting by Fuseli (Reno 1984: 131), and *The Nightmare* featured in magic lantern shows. If nothing else, his paintings have been a gift for modern-day picture researchers seeking out appropriate images for Gothic texts. So we have the “Oxford World Classics” edition of James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) adorned by the detail of a pensive figure in medieval costume from his *Ezzelin and Meduna* (1784; Sir John Soane’s Museum, London) (Hogg

1995); the “Longman Cultural Edition” of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* fronted by *The Nightmare* (Shelley 2007: ix–x); the “Penguin Classics” release of Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto* featuring *Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking* (1781–84; Louvre, Paris) (Walpole 2001); *Percival and Belisane* ornaments Rictor Norton’s anthology *Gothic Readings* (Norton 2000). Meanwhile, *The Nightmare* was famously re-staged for a pivotal scene in (and poster for) Ken Russell’s *Gothic* (1984) (Myrone 2006: 212).

The relationship was not entirely one-sided. We know from the sale of his library that Fuseli had a copy of Matthew Lewis’s edited *Tales of Wonder*, and on one occasion at least produced a direct painted illustration of a contemporary Gothic text, “The Fire King” by Sir Walter Scott, included in that volume (c. 1801–10; Victoria and Albert Museum, London). But far more often Fuseli based his paintings on classical, biblical and distinguished literary sources – Shakespeare and Milton most insistently – making a virtue of the obscurity of his materials and feeding into his public persona as a profoundly well-read, hugely well-educated, but wholly idiosyncratic, even bizarre, foreigner with bad manners and terrible personal habits (Myrone 2001; Lentzsch 2005). Given the importance of Shakespearean appropriations within the Gothic, Fuseli’s treatment of such literary source material – as too, his evocation of overwrought Greek tragedy and vaulting Miltonic Satanism – could productively be subjected to interpretation as parallels to Gothic literary enterprises. But through two key examples we can, I think, apprehend a more profound Gothic dimension to Fuseli’s art.

The first, *Percival Delivering Belisane from the Enchantment of Urma* (Figure 28.3), apparently serves, as the publisher of Norton’s *Gothic Readings* recognized, as an illustration of a Gothic romance, complete with a virile hero, a chained maiden, ghostly heads and a cowering wizard (or witch). In the reproductive print of a related painting, and in the catalogue of the exhibition when the picture was shown at the Royal Academy in 1783, Fuseli claimed that his source was the “Provençal Tales of Kyot.” This was identified by Wolfram von Essenbach as the source of his Arthurian romance, *Parzival*. But, importantly, there is no documented Kyot: Wolfram had invented him, and claimed that Kyot’s text was itself a translation from an Arabic manuscript. Thus are played out the layers of deception characteristic of the Gothic, captured in Jerrold Hogle’s rightly celebrated formulation of the “ghost of the counterfeit” (Hogle 1994).

The second, more celebrated, example is *The Nightmare* (Detroit Institute of Arts), first shown at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1782 and designed to consolidate his growing reputation as a painter of the strange, perverse and supernatural (Figure 28.4). In this he succeeded more completely than he could have imagined: the image was endlessly reproduced in both legitimate editions and pirated copies and variations.

It has drawn commentaries from poets and painters, psychologists and historians of science, as well as art historians, and tributes and lampoons from artists of every kind, ever since (Frayling 2006). Psychological interpretations have focused on the painting as an expression of Fuseli’s sexual desires and frustrations. The back of the painting carries an unfinished portrait of a woman, associated by a number of commentators with Anna Landolt, the former object of Fuseli’s unrequited lust. This had led to the reading of the picture in wholly personal terms, as an expression of sexual revenge or frustration, and the imp’s features have even been taken as resembling Fuseli’s own. Such forgivable speculation aside, the sexual dimensions to this



Figure 28.3 Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). *Percival Delivering Belisane from the Enchantment of Urma* (exhibited 1783)

image could hardly be overlooked, not least in the intimation of sexual penetration found in the horse's head protruding through the fleshy curtains to the left. The folkloric and literary allusions of the image are manifold, in the figure of the “nightmare” itself (the horse) and the presence of an incubus (which also has classical sources). Then there is the possibility of scientific allusions, either in reference to current understanding of sleep paralysis, or the effects of narcotics, stimulants and diet, experiments with bestiality or gynecological theories. We are left to speculate whether the horse and imp are meant to be supernatural figures, manifestations of the woman's fantasies or allegorical representations. The “Gothicness” of the scene need hardly be labored, and hardly depends upon an immediate literary precedent (although the image was subsequently to be folded into as influential a literary production as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* [Ward 2000]).

With both these pictures, and other works that the artist referred to as having “combined” himself, from his imagination (see Myrone 2005: 232), Fuseli explored the possibilities of a single moment of visual drama which, lacking definite literary references, cannot easily be contextualized by reference to a larger narrative. Arguably, the “message” or narrative content is secondary to the more immediate, visceral experience of the image. In this respect they may be legible as examples of the specifically visual Gothic. To follow Marshall Brown's influential argument, the



Figure 28.4 Henry Fuseli (1741–1825). *The Nightmare* (exhibited 1782)

superficial signs of the Gothic are not significant for the literal content they may convey; on the contrary, it is the subjective frisson generated by the play of those signs that counts (Brown 1987: 300). According to Andrea Henderson, the Gothic represents a world “emptied of content”: that is, defined through the shifting processes of personal interaction and exchange that typify commercial society rather than the fixed certainties of “genealogy” (Henderson 1996: 45–59). Fuseli’s fantasy paintings can similarly be interpreted as severed from the inheritance of established literary source materials and the repertoire of biblical and classical narratives. In the spaces of the public art exhibitions, where paintings were consumed as a form of commercial spectacle by a public largely unfamiliar with the canonical literary sources traditionally used by artists, the image could serve as, primarily, a spectacle without necessarily embodying the moral and spiritual lessons conventionally required of “high art.” As with the Gothic novel, Fuseli’s exhibition pictures were products of the commercialization of culture that commented on the effects of commerce and political change on personal identity (Myrone 2005; Pop 2011). But neither were these images reducible to direct or literal illustrations of contemporary Gothic literature, a move which would associate them with a low literary genre and transient character of modern taste. Fuseli’s heroically exaggerated figures, self-consciously indebted to the example of Michelangelo and other Renaissance masters,

lay claim to the higher authority of classical art. They sit uneasily between and across the realms of “high” and “low” culture. As David Bindman summarizes of Fuseli: “His ‘Gothicness’ could span the different worlds of learning and popular curiosity, appealing to the new constituencies for folklore and native legends” (Bindman 2006: 364). That Fuseli himself went on (rather improbably) to occupy high office in the Royal Academy of Art in London, and was responsible for the basic teaching of a following generation of artists including such luminaries as Turner, suggests that he was able to protect himself against the taint of low Gothic taste sufficiently for the art establishment to accept him.

Fuseli occupies a distinctive position within art history, and while he inspired a host of imitators and copyists his peculiar achievement, resting so heavily as it did on his unique persona and the novel commercial opportunities of exhibition culture, was not simply repeated. What Fuseli’s fantasy images introduce is a sense of purposelessness into visual art, a purposelessness driven by commercial and professional interests, with implications which draw close to the moral vacuity of the Gothic. Elsewhere in Europe, and in quite different circumstances, the architectural draughtsman Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78) created with his series of etchings published as *Invenzione capric di Carceri* (first issued in the 1740s and republished 1761) fantastical images of prison interiors which share this combination of visceral visual and emotional impact and narrative ambiguity, which if directed commercially toward Grand Tour gentlemen seeking to affiliate themselves with the traditions of classical learning, also attracted commentary from several writers associated with the Gothic and a more nakedly emotional engagement with unreason and imagination (Wilton-Ely 1978: 81–91; Klein 1985) (Figure 28.5). William Beckford recorded being haunted by the architecture of Venice while in the city in 1780:

Horrors and dismal prospects haunted my fancy on my return . . . snatching my pencil, I drew chasms and subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi.
(quoted in Wilton-Ely 1978: 89)

Later, Thomas De Quincey in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) referred to Piranesi’s “vast Gothic halls: on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, &c &c expressive of enormous powers put forth and resistance overcome” (quoted in Wilton-Ely 1978: 81). Piranesi’s art matched an emerging conception of the imagination as a dark, complex chamber, and his etching technique itself may even convey a sense of Gothic explorations. Barbara Maria Stafford has characterized his use of the etching needle as “a creative surgical tool to uncover information about an otherwise irretrievable past” (Stafford 1991: 58).

Fuseli and Piranesi represent the possibilities for imaginative indulgence and an un-mooring of art from regulation (which has traditionally been seen as a setting free of “imagination,” but which might, more critically, be addressed as commercially and professionally motivated, if not simply cynically so). Both Fuseli and Piranesi were relatively discreet in their evocation of horror. For all the wailing witches and terrific swordplay we can find across Fuseli’s output, there is remarkably little bloodletting, and the eroticism is, at least in works intended for public



Figure 28.5 Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778). *The Carceri*: Plate 14, second edition: *The Gothic Arch* (1761)

display, implied rather than explicit, while Piranesi's prisons are uninhabited, aside from the odd, faintly indicated figure on a tiny scale. The political and physical violence of the French Revolution was culturally transformative (Paulson 1983; Bindman 1989), not least in eliciting graphic images of horror from satirical artists. James Gillray's (1756–1815) explicit *Un Petit Souper, à la Parisienne* (1792) (Figure 28.6) responds to news of recent massacres in revolutionary Paris, but also anticipates the greater horrors of the Terror (Myrone 2006: 179). Indeed, Gillray's print is rooted not only in its moment, but in a rich and complex tradition of images of cannibalism, encompassing classical imagery relating to Saturn (who ate his own son), folkloric tales of werewolves and vampires, and accounts of witchcraft, war crimes and acts of hunger cannibalism in times of famine and strife, mobilizing Gothic resources for political effect.

Gillray's image was meant as comical: but the Gothic horror of this and others of his images is excessive to the point of being unsettling. Gillray acknowledged his debt to Fuseli and conceived of his own images as "Caricatura-Sublime" in mocking imitation of his art, a formulation which exposes the potential proximity of the ridiculous and high-minded (Myrone 2006: 131). If for Gillray and Fuseli, working in the context of a highly commercialized Britain, where political liberties and



Figure 28.6 James Gillray (1756–1815). *Un Petir Souper, à la Parisienne* (published 1792)

freedom of speech were habitually claimed as native, this conjunction of the sublime and the absurd could be professionally and critically productive, the historical trauma of the Revolution gave some license to thinking the unthinkable, and making visible the obscene, further shifting the boundaries of the stateable and unstateable, the satirical and the serious, which in other contexts could be more challenging. The case in point is the Spanish artist Francisco Goya's (1746–1828) series of prints *Los Caprichos* ("The Caprices," 1799) and *Los Desastres de la Guerra* ("The Disasters of War," 1810–20) (Figure 28.7). These range across full-on body horror to perverted religion, devil-worship, rape and torture, incorporating irrational distortions, bizarre conjunctions, obscenities and obscurities which have been compared to the Gothic novel since the mid-nineteenth century (Paulson 1983: 290; Schulz 2005: 196). While Gothic literature as such did not flourish in Spain given the political and religious censorship which prevailed, their pictorial qualities also correspond to Gothic strategies of obscurity and revelation: "In transgressing the laws of optics . . . Goya provides a visual equivalent for the viewer's confrontation with events outside of the realm of the normally visible" (Schulz 2005: 189–90; Curbet 2002). Although not couched in the terms of the Gothic, Barbara Maria Stafford's evocation of Goya's *Capriccios* as offering "a spectacle of permutable empty masks, bestial unions, and shifting viewpoints impossible to get right in this world" and of figures "oddly resoldered and put on display as gobbets of distorted thought" presents a formula of optical, visceral and semiotic instability with definite Gothic resonances (Stafford 1991: 273–74). Tellingly, the abduction scene illustrated here was first sketched with



Figure 28.7 Francisco Goya (1746–1828). *Los Caprichos*, Plate 8: “Hooded Figures Carrying off Woman” from a bound album of first edition impressions (1799)

the indication of a full landscape setting, but rendered in print form with only a black background (Schulz 2005: 190), conveying a disorientating vacuum so that the anonymous act of (presumably sexual) violence which takes place within it appears as a flashlit exposure of grim horror.

The visual arts of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century offer multiple points of contact and interaction with the culture of the Gothic, only rarely (when painting and independent graphic art is considered) taking the form of direct illustration. We can see painting and literature occupying some of the same cultural spaces, wherein values take on a new, sometimes radical, instability, variously aligned to professional and commercial interests, political values, or more obscure and personal motivations.

From a modern perspective the artist who most productively explored that instability can be reckoned to be the visionary artist William Blake (1756–1827). Although by no means a straightforwardly Gothic writer or artist, Blake's art is permeated by an array of Gothic resonances (Bindman 1973; Hamlyn and Phillips 2000: 32–33), from the Ossianic drama of his early written and illustrated work *Tiriel* (c. 1789), to the visual and literary tropes of binding, containment, body horror, spectral presences and torture in the Prophetic Books of the 1790s, and into the medievalizing tendencies in formal characteristics of many of his visual designs. Moreover, Gothic literature, strictly defined, evidently had its place in the Blake household; one of the few direct painted illustrations of a modern Gothic text is his wife Catherine's depiction of *Agnes* from Lewis's notoriously shocking *The Monk* (1796) (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). While he can hardly be counted among the writers of Gothic



Figure 28.8 William Blake (1757–1827). *The Ghost of a Flea* (c. 1819–20)

fiction, Blake as a visual artist was responsible for the most enduring image of Gothic horror, which may be paired only with Fuseli's *Nightmare* in terms of fame and influence: *The Ghost of a Flea* (c. 1819–20) (Figure 28.8). Both images have, retrospectively, been incorporated into “Gothic” iconography through repeated references, illustrations, allusions and lampoons. Blake's little picture was referred to as early as 1827 as a “pernicious little vampire” and exhibited in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century more emphatically as “A Vampire” (Myrone 2006: 208–9). Yet we remain unclear as to how seriously the image was intended originally, and whether the vision that supposedly inspired the Flea's form was genuine, or cultivated by Blake to satisfy his patron, the artist and astrologer John Varley. The image has been reproduced and mimicked innumerable times since as an iconic image of monstrosity – “evil, gothic, grotesque, stalking through a starry realm between stage curtains” (Jones 2003). Contemporary renditions range from the Flea's appearance as the embodiment of fathomless evil floating through history in Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's epic graphic novel *From Hell* (1991–96) through to featuring as a costumed character revisiting Blake in the absurdist British comedian Noel Fielding's “Luxury Comedy” TV series (2012).

The fate of Blake's *Flea* allows us to see how the perverse fruitfulness of Gothic, its historical legacy, is as a point of instability between media, and between high culture and low, the commercial and esoteric, the popular and the cultish. Further to this, as W.J.T. Mitchell asserts, in his seminal account of the “pictorial turn”: “What makes for the sense of the pictorial turn . . . is not that we have some powerful account of visual representation that is dictating the terms of cultural theory, but that pictures form a point of peculiar friction and discomfort across a broad range of intellectual inquiry” (Mitchell 1994: 13). Taking the visual arts into account in exploring eighteenth-century Gothic may, then, not simply involve extending the range of materials gathered under that rubric, or matching images directly to texts; the incomplete correspondences between Gothic literature and the art which draws closest to Gothic forms and values may help us expose further complexities within the dynamic cultural formations which emerged in the move into modernity at the end of the eighteenth century.

REFERENCES

- Barker, E. (2009) “Documents Relating to Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97),” *The Walpole Society*, 71: 1–216.
- Baugh, C. (2007) “Philippe de Loutherbourg: Technology-Driven Entertainments and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70.2: 251–68.
- Bindman, D. (1973) “Blake's Gothicised Imagination and the History of England,” in M. Paley and M. Phillips (eds) *William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- (1989) *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution*, London: British Museum Publications.
- (2006) “Fuseli. Zürich and London” in *The Burlington Magazine*, 148: 364–65
- Brewer, J. (1997) *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, London: HarperCollins.

- Brown, M. (1987) "A Philosophical View of the Gothic Novel," *Studies in Romanticism*, 26: 275–30.
- Burns, S. (2004) *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Castle, T. (1998) "Introduction," *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe, 1794, Oxford: Oxford University Press, vii–xxvi.
- Chard, C. (1999) "Introduction," *The Romance of the Forest* by Ann Radcliffe, 1791, Oxford: Oxford University Press, vii–xxiv.
- Charlesworth, M. (ed.) (2002) *The Gothic Revival 1720–1870: Literary Sources & Documents*, 3 vols, Mountfield: Helm.
- Curbet, J. (2002) "Hallelujah to your Dying Screams of Torture!: Representations of Ritual Violence in English and Spanish Romanticism", in A. Horner (ed.) *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760–1960*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- D'Arcy Wood, G. (2001) *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eagleton, T. (1990) *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Frayling, C. (2006) "Fuseli's *The Nightmare*: Somewhere Between the Sublime and the Ridiculous," in M. Myrone (ed.) *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination*, London: Tate Publishing: 9–20.
- Gamer, M. (2000) *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grunenberg C. (1997) *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth Century Art*, Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art.
- Hamlyn, R. and M. Phillips (eds) (2000) *William Blake*, London: Tate Publishing.
- Henderson, A. (1996) *Romantic Identities: Varieties of Subjectivity 1774–1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hogg, J. (1995) *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, ed. John Carey, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hogle, J.E. (1994) "The Ghost of the Counterfeit in the Genesis of the Gothic," in A. Lloyd Smith and V. Sage (eds) *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 23–33.
- Jones, D. (2011) *Gothic Machine: Textualities, Pre-Cinematic Media and Film in Popular Visual Culture 1670–1910*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Jones, J. (2003) "Portrait of the Week: *The Ghost of a Flea*, William Blake (c.1819–20)," *The Guardian*, April 19. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2003/apr/19/art.williamblake> (accessed November 1, 2012).
- Kennedy, D. (2001) "The Ruined Abbey in the Eighteenth Century," *Philological Quarterly*, 80: 503–23.
- Klein, J. (1985) "Terror and Historicity in Giovanni Battista Piranesi as Forms of Romantic Subjectivity," *Notebooks in Cultural Analysis*, 2: 90–111.
- (1991) "Mathematics of Desire: On the Meanings of Darker Movements in English Eighteenth-Century Literature and the Fine Arts," in P. Wagner (ed.) *Erotica and the Enlightenment*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- (2005) *Schwarze Romantik: studien zur englischen Literatur im europäischen kontext*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- (2011) with G. Kuttler, *Mathematik des Begehrens*, Hamburg: Shoebox House Verlag.
- Leach, S. and Manby, S. (2012) "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Joseph Wright's *Philosopher by Lamplight*," *British Art Journal* 13.1: 37–45.
- Lentzsch, F. (ed.) (2005) *Fuseli: The Wild Swiss*, Zurich: Kunsthaus.

- Lock, F.P. (1999) "Wright of Derby's *Miravan Breaking Open the Tomb of His Ancestors*," *The Burlington Magazine*, 141: 544-45.
- Martin, P. (2009) "Nightmare," in M. Mulvey-Roberts (ed.) *The Handbook of the Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 206.
- Mattick, P. (ed.) (1993) *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCalman, I. (ed.) (1999) *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miles, R. (2005) "Introduction," *Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*, Romantic Circles: Praxis Series. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://romantic.arhu.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/intro/miles.html>> (accessed November 1, 2012).
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Monk, S. (1960) *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Mulvey-Roberts, M. (ed.) (2009) *The Handbook of the Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Myrone, M. (2001) *Henry Fuseli*, London: Tate Publishing.
- (2005) *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- (2006) *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination*, London: Tate Publishing.
- Norton, R. (2000) *Gothic Readings: The First Wave 1764-1840*, Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Ovenden, G. (2009) "Gothic Art," in M. Mulvey-Roberts, (ed.) *The Handbook of the Gothic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 127.
- Paley, M.D. (1986) *The Apocalyptic Sublime*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Paulson, R. (1983) *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Pop, A. (2011) "Sympathetic Spectators: Henry Fuseli's *Nightmare* and Emma Hamilton's *Attitudes*," *Art History*, 34: 934-57.
- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2004) *The Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Reno, R.P. (1984) "James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew G. Lewis' *The Castle Spectre*: Challenges of the Supernatural Ghost on the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 9: 95-107.
- Schulz, A. (2005) *Goya's Caprichos: Aesthetics, Perception, and the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shelley, M. (2007) *Frankenstein*, 1818, ed. S.J. Wolfson, New York: Pearson Longman.
- Solkin, D. (ed.) (2001) *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1837*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stafford, B.M. (1991) *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Thomas, S. (2008) *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle*, New York: Routledge.
- Todd, R. (1946) *Tracks in the Snow*, London: Grey Walls Press.
- Walpole, H. (2001) *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, ed. M. Gamer, London: Penguin.
- Ward, M. (2000) "A Painting of the Unspeakable: Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* and the Creation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," *Midwest Modern Language Association*, 33.1: 20-31.
- Wilton-Ely, J. (1978) *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi*, London: Thames and Hudson.

FURTHER READING

- Curbet, J. (2002) "Hallelujah to your Dying Screams of Torture!: Representations of Ritual Violence in English and Spanish Romanticism", in A. Horner (ed.) *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760–1960*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 161–82. (The art of Francisco Goya in the context of the Gothic.)
- D'Arcy Wood, G. (2001) *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Exploration of Romantic visuality.)
- Eitner, L. (1978) "Cages, Prisons and Captives in Eighteenth-Century Art," in K. Kroeber and W. Walling (eds), *Images of Romanticism: Verbal and Visual Affinities*, New Haven: Yale University Press. (Classic account of this key Gothic theme in the visual arts.)
- Jones, D. (2011) *Gothic Machine: Textualities, Pre-Cinematic Media and Film in Popular Visual Culture 1670–1910*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press. (Extended exploration of Gothic visual technologies.)
- Klein, J. (1985) "Terror and Historicity in Giovanni Battista Piranesi as Forms of Romantic Subjectivity," *Notebooks in Cultural Analysis*, 2: 90–111. (Essay considering the Gothic spaces of Piranesi's graphic art.)
- (1991) "Mathematics of Desire: On the Meanings of Darker Movements in English Eighteenth-Century Literature and the Fine Arts," in P. Wagner (ed.) *Erotica and the Enlightenment*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang. (Important essay linking Fuseli, Piranesi and the Gothic novel.)
- Lentzsch, F. (ed.) (2005) *Fuseli: The Wild Swiss*, Zurich: Kunsthau. (Comprehensive exhibition of the key Swiss-born artist.)
- Miles, R. (2005) "Introduction," *Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*, Romantic Circles: Praxis Series. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://romantic.arhu.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/intro/miles.html>> (accessed 1 November 2012). (Introducing an important special issue of this online journal exploring Gothic visuality in art, literature and theatre.)
- Myrone, M. (2006) *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination*, London: Tate Publishing. (Exhibition exploring Gothic themes in British art, c.1770–1830.)
- (2007) "Henry Fuseli and Gothic Spectacle," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70: 289–312. (Essay linking Fuseli to Gothic visuality.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

GOTHIC VISUALITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



Elizabeth McCarthy

When aesthetic theory makes the eye the pre-eminent organ of truth where can the unbelievable and impossibly monstrous spectacle stand? As John Ruskin wrote, “To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion – all in one” (Ruskin 1987: 40). But what if our clear vision falls upon sights so inconceivably hideous that our rational mind revolts at the profanity of the poetry, prophecy and religion offered? And why would we consciously seek out such intellectually and emotionally disturbing sights? The latent paradox of a vision that is attracted to what is unbelievably repulsive is an issue returned to time and again by critics of the Gothic horror genre, most particularly by those critics whose focus is the horror film. However, the issue of the visuality in Gothic horror is as old as the genre itself. By placing this visuality in a socio-historical, as well as a theoretical, context, the visual attraction of the horrifically repulsive can be understood not as an anomaly but as a part of a natural progression which the genre itself invites. While such an exploration will not answer the question of *why* we look, it will make the apparent straightforwardness of such questions seem far more problematic.

The main aim of this chapter is to counter readings of visual depiction as a limiting process which fixes imaginative and interpretative possibilities. This narrow reading of the visual is put forward by numerous critics, including Wolfgang Iser, in his essay “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” where, using Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* (1749) as his example, he argues:

The reader of *Tom Jones* is able to visualize the hero virtually for himself, and so his imagination senses the vast number of possibilities; the moment these possibilities are narrowed down to one complete and immutable picture, the imagination is put out of action, and we feel we have been somehow cheated.

(Iser 2008: 301)

Such claims seek to devalue the physical sensory capacity of sight, accusing it of somehow blocking intellectual thought. A considered exploration of the subject reveals that there is nothing “complete” or “immutable” about the visual image’s relationship with the textual. The Gothic’s relationship with visuality, in which text

and image continually mutate, is proof of this. This chapter does not propose a detailed chronological history of Gothic horror's forays into visual media; rather, it provides a panoramic exploration of the viscosity of Gothic horror in the nineteenth century, one which manifested itself in various forms through a continuous process of mutation. This theme of mutation, of morphic as well as generic variability and possibility within Gothic horror, is a key element of the genre's success. With all of its negative connotations, mutation is, nonetheless, a potentially positive force because it keeps open the possibility of change. Mutation is, after all, a form of adaptation, and it is this mutative ability of the form and content of Gothic horror, as a whole, which holds our attention and fixes our gaze. As David J. Skal puts it, the genre's dark energies are "shape-changing entities that move in the modern imagination like dream-carvings on a dark carousel. With each revolution they mutate and evolve, the better to hold our attention" (Skal 1994: 19). Here, Skal hits upon an important aspect of Gothic horror: both in its depictions and as a genre itself, it not only invites mutation, it thrives on it, and in particular, it thrives on making that mutation visible.

Rosemary Jackson's assertion that fantastic literature "traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture; that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (Jackson 1981: 2), points out this literature's tendency to disclose, reveal and make visible that which is deemed best hidden from view. Whether these taboo subjects take the form of the discontents or anxieties of a given class, race or gender, or whether they involve other related issues of economic, religious or scientific developments, Gothic literature has, at different points in time and through varying methods, engaged with all of them. In this sense, Gothic literature can be seen as arising out of a context of social mutation, which it consequently gives form to in its vivid depictions of contorted worlds and beings gone awry. What such an understanding also reveals is that even in the very origins of the Gothic there resides a compulsion to visualize the mutation of society as a whole, as well as that of a given individual within it.

ILLUSTRATING EVIL

Within this context, actual works of Gothic fiction reveal a tendency toward detailed depictions of physical appearance, not so much as an aid to a broader narrative interpretation but as the very key to interpretation itself. Gothic writing's viscosity, that is, its obsession with the verbal rendering of the visual is, of course, to be expected. In a fiction that deals with the unseen, the unimaginable and, indeed, the unbelievable, convincingly detailed physical depictions often prevail. Only Dickens himself, a writer who is not without his Gothic elements, gives such vivid descriptions of facial and bodily features as can be found in the works of writers such as Bram Stoker and H.P. Lovecraft. In Gothic literature looks count. Descriptions of such characters as Stoker's Count Dracula or Lovecraft's Wilbur Whateley read almost as blueprints for illustrators. Gaston Leroux's Gothic romance, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1911), contains descriptions so precise and vivid that Lon Chaney's appearance as Erik, the Phantom, in the 1925 cinema version, seems almost entirely based on Leroux's text, right down to the last detail:

He is extraordinarily thin and his dress-coat hangs on a skeleton frame. His eyes are so deep that you can hardly see the fixed pupils. You just see two big black

holes, as in a dead man's skull. His skin, which is stretched across his bones like a drumhead, is not white, but a nasty yellow. His nose is so little worth talking about that you can't see it side-face; and the absence of that nose is a horrible thing to look at. All the hair he has is three or four long dark locks on his forehead and behind his ears.

(Leroux 2009: 9)

Even in instances where the descriptive capacity of the narrator fails, as it so notoriously does with Stevenson's Mr Hyde, the very absence of description draws attention to the importance of vision and the elusiveness of the visual when language alone must capture it.

This idea of words not being enough in themselves, coupled with the use of vivid verbal depictions as blueprints for visual interpretations, brings us to the important role of the illustrator in the development of Gothic's visuality. Virtually all of Dickens's publications were immediately supplemented with illustrations. His close working with the illustrators Phiz (Hablot Browne) and George Cruikshank is a perfect example of a writer's consciousness of the elemental visuality of his/her work and the benefit of enhancing that work with faithful illustrations. In instances such as the spontaneous combustion of Mr Krook in *Bleak House* (1852–53), Phiz's interpretation of the scene becomes as instrumental in the suspension of the reader's disbelief in such a remarkably horrific occurrence as Dickens's own vehement argument on the subject in his 1853 Preface to the novel.

Of course, Dickens is not alone in this appreciation of the potential of illustration to provoke and convince the reader. The sensational and downright false stories of many "news" publications, both before, during and after Dickens's time, relied heavily on visual renditions to support their facts. Take, for example, the report of the pig-face woman in the penny publication *The Magazine of Curiosity and Wonder* (1835). While this story is essentially a rehashing of a centuries-old tale, the publishers of this "news report" understood that such accounts virtually demand visualization, for although the reader can conceptualize the image of both a pig and a woman, a mutated cross between the two disrupts conceptual categories and, by doing so, provokes an interest which visual depiction will come some way closer to satisfying than words alone. Another particularly Gothic and grisly "true" tale appears in *The Terrific Register* (1825) (Figure 29.1). It is the story of French man, Antoine Langulet, whose unnatural appetite for human flesh in the "highest state of putrefaction" leads him to rifle rotten bodies from their graves and "feast upon them on the spot" (Anon. 1825: 737). The unimaginable horridness of such a report is imagined by the story's illustrator, whose explicit visual depiction of cannibalism makes the report's claims and, more significantly, the activity of modern-day cannibalism in a civilized nation, a little less unimaginable and a little more disturbing and possible.

These penny publications are just two of many such reasonably priced, sensational texts, aimed at an ever-growing literate public, that relied on illustrated matter in the relating of a story. The Gothic bluebooks of the late eighteenth century, the penny dreadfuls and, later, the shilling shockers of the nineteenth century, were all replete with tales of terror, dramatically illustrated and bursting with a visual excess and imagination that would find its way into the pulp magazines of the 1930s and 1940s. Just as the stage play and cinema would later do, these publications



Figure 29.1 “The Dead Devoured by the Living,” in volume II of *The Terrific Register: Or, Record of Crimes, Judgments, Providences, and Calamities* (London: Sherwood, Jones, and Company, 1825)

ransacked the rich store of imagery in the literary Gothic and appropriated it for their own vivid visual ends.

Gothic bluebooks mercilessly pirated versions of Gothic novels like *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Monk* (1796) and *Melmoth The Wanderer* (1820). These unscrupulously published short volumes (approximately 30–70 pages) appealed to readers who were either reluctant or unable to negotiate long two-to-five-volume originals but delighted in these inexpensive versions with their sensational engravings and woodcuts. As Edith Birkhead explains:

Ingenious authors realized that it was possible to compress into five pages of a short story as much sensation as was contained in the five volumes of a Gothic romance. For the brevity of the tales, which were issued in “chap book,” readers were compensated by gaudily colored illustrations.

(Birkhead 2005: 123)

The following comments from the *London Review*, dated May 1866, highlight just how integral a part illustration played in these publications:

At the East end of London almost all the murder and highwayman literature of the past sixty years is being republished and sold in penny numbers. In tobacconists’ shop windows, up dirty courts and alleys, this literature may be seen

suspended between canisters and brier-roots in strings. The woodcuts are of the Blueskin and Jonathan Wild stamp – slouching fellows with big boots, black masks, and gory poniards flashing high above the victims’ heads.

(Anon. 1866: 5)

What one gets through an accumulation of publications such as these, right up until the pulp magazines and comics of the mid-twentieth century, is a soup of visual imagery that remained relatively uncensored. This vast store of visual imagery would in turn be consumed by generations of artists, writers and, later, filmmakers. The continual mutation of the format in which images of Gothic horror could be transmitted is matched, even surpassed, by the sheer mutative capacity of the images themselves: images which suggested things their corresponding texts often did not – making non-verbal connections with a myriad of cultural concerns and anxieties. For example, the illustrator Mary Byfield’s depictions of scenes of gruesome torture, violence and execution often went much further in expressing an ambivalent attitude toward sexual and racial difference and the politics of power, justice and law and order than the actual texts which her illustrations accompanied.

As Byfield’s “Socivizca roasting two Turkish prisoners” (see Figure 29.2) shows, one of the great strengths of visual depiction is its highly suggestive inter- and extra-textual nature, an element which often prefigures the textual in the issues and concerns it raises. Such an understanding of the visual image is somewhat



Figure 29.2 Mary Byfield, “Socivizca roasting two Turkish prisoners,” in volume II of *The Terrific Register: Or, Record of Crimes, Judgments, Providences, and Calamities* (London: Sherwood, Jones, and Company, 1825)

overlooked by assertions such as Wolfgang Iser's, a position which gives primacy to the mind's eye and its capacity to envision over physical sight.

Amid all the free-flow of visual images and dubious publishing rights in blue-books and penny dreadfuls, there were, of course, more legitimate visual interpretations of what have become nineteenth-century Gothic horror literary classics. *Frankenstein* (1818), *Dracula* (1897), Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872), the works of Edgar Allan Poe and even the elusive Mr Hyde have all had their share of visual interpretations. Some illustrations, such as Theodore von Holst's interpretation of the Creature as a classic nude in the frontispiece to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, may seem incongruous to modern-day audiences, familiar with Frankenstein's creation as the scarred and bolt-necked Boris Karloff in James Whale's 1931 film. Other illustrations, such as David Henry Friston's etchings for Le Fanu's "Carmilla," seem prescient. Friston's drawings, replete with young women with heaving bosoms and see-through nightdresses, pre-figure Hammer Horror in their overt sexualizing of the vampire tale. The images of Frankenstein's monster, Hyde and others, as well as their names, were in turn, often assimilated into other visual discourses, most notably in the satirical political cartoons of *Punch* magazine, where their mutable Otherness becomes a visual shortcut for the vote-seeking proletariat and the independence-seeking Irish nationalist, to name but two.

Among all of the official illustrators of Gothic horror tales there are few whose name is more synonymous with the work they illustrate than Harry Clarke (see Figure 29.3). His visual interpretations of Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1908) are a good example of the successful combination of word and visual image. While Clarke's work might be said to stay true to the spirit of Poe, it also incorporates new elements of a purely personal vision which belong to Clarke, the visual artist.

Thomas Bodkin, a journalist for *The Irish Statesman* and a contemporary of Clarke, makes this observation when reviewing Clarke's Poe illustrations:

Mr Clarke gives full rein to his talent for the macabre, the fantastic and the terrible, with results that are at times gruesome, in an extreme degree . . . Mr Clarke's drawings are never so much illustrations as variations upon a given theme. The setting of many of Poe's tales was that of the author's time, but the artist has cast them into a bizarre world of his own fashioning, where strange plants flourish and the people are clad in costumes of unexperienced richness and beauty.

(quoted in Bowe 1983: 54)

What Clarke's work shows, and what Bodkin's review points out, is not only the potentially enhancing effect that illustration can have on a Gothic tale, but also the essentially non-derivative nature of illustration due to the process of mutation it undergoes: mutation from one form to another (that is, from textual to visual); from one artist's language to another artist's visual interpretation of it, and from this artist's visual interpretation to that of the viewer. The complex interplay between word and image, and between interpretations and interpretations of interpretations, reveals the richness of signification that exists when the visual and intellectual powers of understanding are given the freedom to change and mingle. Far from blocking imaginative interpretation, then, the illustrator's art can add another layer of meaning to a literary work, offering a whole new set of interpretative possibilities.



Figure 29.3 Harry Clarke, “Morella,” in Edgar Allan Poe’s *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1919)

STAGING THE GOTHIC

In comparison to the illustrative format, the nature and effects of dramatic interpretations of the Gothic story are far more difficult to trace and quantify. However, what is clear is that just as quickly as many of these works were written and illustrated, they were turned into numerous and varying stage productions. The Gothic tale’s sensationalism and spectacle were perfect material for theatre producers with an eye on pleasing box-office figures, and the audiences came in droves. The actor Thomas Potter Cooke played both Polidori’s vampire Ruthven and Shelley’s Frankenstein monster on stage as early as the 1820s (Figure 29.4). In the 1840s, the Bannerworth episode of the popular penny dreadful *Varney the Vampyre* was played on stage before the story of Varney himself was complete. Richard Mansfield played

both Jekyll and Hyde in a successful 1880s stage production, while H. B. Irving, Sir Henry Irving's son, resumed the role(s) in a highly melodramatic 1910 stage version. The actor/playwright/producer Hamilton Deane played Shelley's monster in the 1920s and adapted and produced the first successful stage version of *Dracula*, a version which would be taken to America by Horace Liveright with the Hungarian born actor, Bela Lugosi, in the title role.

Transferred into a live and primarily visual experience, the original stories of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* underwent great mutations. Often for quite basic reasons of time and plausibility, elements of the plot and its characters were shifted, combined or eliminated completely. Yet, for reasons distinctly based on the visibility of drama, certain interpretative aspects were added to these original stories, some of which would find their way into cinematic versions,



Figure 29.4 Mr. T.P. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in the Character of the Monster in the Dramatic Romance of *Frankenstein*, painted by Wageman. Drawn on stone by N. Whittock, 1923

and from there enter into the common visual consciousness in cultures where the original stories were forgotten or never known. For the first time, actual people would take on the mutated forms of Shelley, Stevenson and Stoker's literary creations. In this new context, visual interpretation now included make-up, costume and physical gesture. Cooke's version of Shelley's monster appeared as a neo-classical wild man, a visual interpretation which was not to prove a lasting influence, although, by playgoers' accounts, he was quite an awesome sight. However, Cooke's physical performance, as described by Shelley herself in 1823, seems to express the muted and tormented aspect of the Creature which would become a mainstay in many following interpretations: "His seeking, as it were, for support: his trying to grasp at the sounds he heard . . . appeared to create a breathless excitement in the audience" (Shelley 2005: 126).

Deane's version of the Creature would again emphasize its forlorn and victimized physical presence, complete with heavy clumping boots. Richard Mansfield's desire to play both Jekyll and Hyde, and transform in clear view of the audience, would become a visual must for future interpretations of Stevenson's divided creation. The high collar and cape worn by Raymond Huntely in Deane's production of *Dracula*, which was originally worn to enable the actor to turn his back on the audience and apparently disappear into the blackness of the stage, would become synonymous with the visual image of the aristocratic Count. And, of course, in Liveright's production of the play, Bela Lugosi's whole physical being – his piercing eyes, his long sinewy fingers – would become an immensely powerful visual signifier of Stoker's fictional character, which would, with time, become all the more powerful through the bright lights, big screen and repeat performances of the cinematic apparatus.

THE SCIENCE OF LOOKING

In many respects, the pivotal moment in concepts of visuality and the Gothic comes at the close of the Victorian era, when the social sciences of evolutionism, criminology and degeneration theory developed alongside a mass of new optical gadgetry; both of these areas, alone or combined, placed concepts of vision and monstrosity in the same social equation. To a great extent, my discussion has used the Victorian era as its focal point, for both the explosion of illustrated publications and the rise of the (not-so-legitimate) theatre, along with the writing of some of the seminal works of Gothic horror fiction, took place during this period. However, I would now like to focus specifically on the era's development of criminal anthropology as a social science, and how its close link to concepts of visuality played its part in the Gothic's representation of evil. Firstly, it must be said that influence is not all one way; much of the language and imagery used by the social sciences of this period is, itself, heavily influenced by the Gothic, and often steeped in Gothic modes of thinking and expression. The language and imagery of criminal anthropologists such as Henry Boies owe a debt to the sensationalist language of writers like Lewis and Poe: "criminals," Boies observed in 1893, "are the imperfect, knotty, knurly, worm-eaten, half-rotten fruit of the human race" (quoted in Rafter 1998: 112).

Criminal anthropology, just like evolutionism and degeneration theory, focuses on the observation of physical characteristics as a means of tracing underlying psychological and behavioral patterns. Criminal anthropology, in particular, placed

great faith in direct observation as a means of detecting the individual's moral status, whereby the body, and particularly the head and face, were believed to mirror moral capacity. The criminal type, as Lombroso and other criminal anthropologists such as Havelock Ellis described him/her, would tend toward particular malformations of the skull and facial asymmetry; they would often possess a pointed head, high cheekbones, a heavy jaw, pointed ears, scant facial hair except for heavy eyebrows, a receding brow, and overdeveloped arms. This physiognomic belief in the outward and visible sign of corruption is a major element of much Gothic writing. Indeed, *Bleak House*, a novel which so successfully crosses the Gothic with the detective narrative, is the work of a writer who wholly believed in the manifestation of evil into clearly visible traits. In fact, three years after the publication of *Bleak House*, Dickens wrote an article entitled "The Demeanour of Murderers" (June 14, 1856) in his journal *Household Words*. Here he argues that if we were only trained to look correctly we would be able to recognize the criminal simply by looking: "Nature never writes in a bad hand. Her writing, as it may be read in the human countenance, is invariably legible, if we come at all trained in reading it" (Dickens 1997: 447). In many cases, the Gothic tale is also a tale of detection, being based as it so often is on the unknown and on the partial or full revelation of the unknown. Similarly, Dickens's thoughts on detection of the criminal are to be found in many Gothic works, which place great emphasis on the presence of evil through its visual impact. This idea of knowing evil when you see it, as proffered by Dickens and criminal anthropology, finds its way directly into descriptions of Gothic villains such as Dracula, whose facial features closely correspond to those of Lombroso and Ellis's typical criminal:

His face was a strong aquiline . . . with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily around the temples . . . His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting across the nose. The mouth was fixed and rather cruel-looking. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheek firm though thin.

(Stoker 1996: 23–24)

Similarly, Mr Hyde's features, though vague, have a certain "troglodytic" "ape-like" (Stevenson 2008: 16, 20) quality equivalent to the subhuman type, with his inferior morphological features, whose violation of social and moral law was understood by criminal anthropologists to be a natural by-product of his biological condition of atavism. In these Gothic tales, just as in the social science of Lombroso and his contemporaries, the visual is never purely about surfaces: it tells another story too. Every wrinkle, every scar, heavy brow, gnarled tooth or twisted lip is a sign, if we could only see it and read it correctly.

The importance of vision as an aid to knowledge and personal safety is a fundamental aspect of both the Gothic and the crime-fighting forces of the Victorian era. And with the advent of high quality photography, the ardent belief in the vision's ability to detect and capture the face of evil grew. At the same time Lombroso and Ellis were developing their theories on the physical appearance of the criminal type, another criminologist, Sir Francis Galton, was perfecting his own method of visual detection through the creation of the composite photograph. This worked by means

of exposing different images of numerous criminals on to a single negative and printing the result, thereby apparently visualizing and compounding all the common physical traits of the typical criminal. In *The Criminal* (1890) Havelock Ellis uses one of Galton's composite photographs as his frontispiece, making the relation between the two fields of study quite explicit. This heavy reliance on physical appearance and photography as aids in the study of criminal anthropology runs contemporaneously with the use of the photograph as a tool for actual criminal detection and law enforcement. It was the late nineteenth century that witnessed the advent of the mug shot. Many logical and noble claims have been made for the use of photography and the practice of voyeurism as a means of social and self protection. Yet mixed with this is a curiosity, and a compulsion, to bear witness to the unquantifiable Otherness of evil criminals, as if they were the malformed monsters and freaks of a carnival show or a Gothic tale, their sheer power of fascination emanating from their apparent contravening of natural order. Concomitant with this desire to see evil in order to differentiate it from ourselves, however, is the underlying anxiety and thrill that when we look into its face we will recognize our own features.

A major irony of the Victorian era's deep-seated belief in the power of vision as the ultimate method of divining reality and truth is that this is also the era which saw significant developments in a large range of optical gadgetry which continually challenged the eye's mastery over reality, proving conclusively that sight was something quite easily tinkered with. The nineteenth century saw the invention of optical devices of astounding number and variation, such as the thaumatrope,

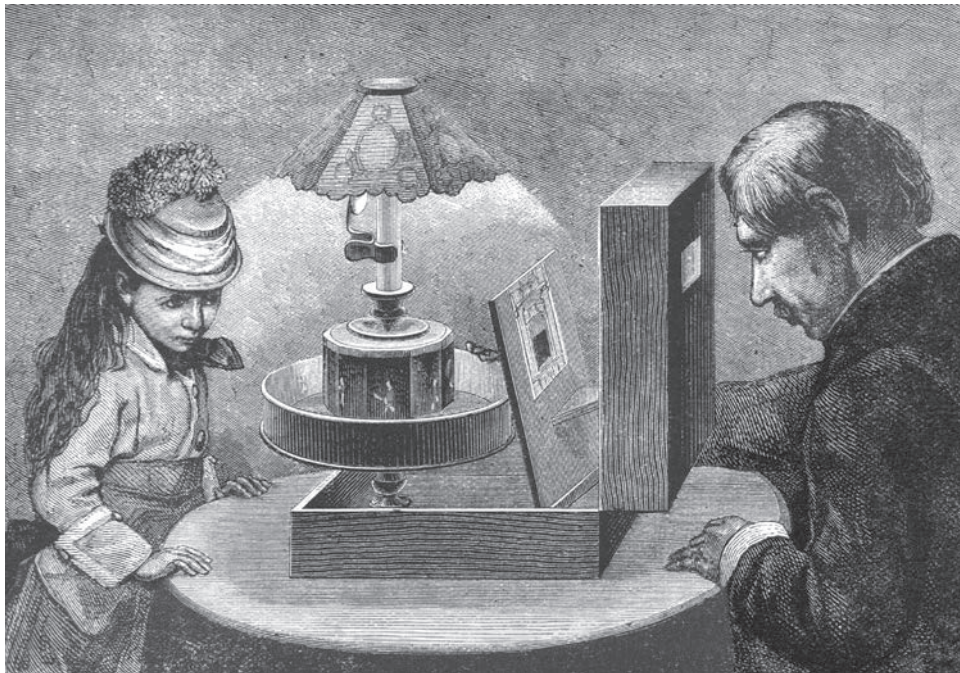


Figure 29.5 Praxinoscope theatre

phenakistoscope, zoetrope, kaleidoscope, diorama, stereoscope, camera lucida, photographic camera, binocular telescope, praxinoscope, microscope, stereopticon and kinetoscope.

In a sense, the end of the Victorian period is pivotal to modern concepts of visibility and the Gothic because it draws together the paradox of sight. It is a time when the predominance of realist modes of representation leads the forces of law and order to use photography in their battle against crime and yet it is also a time when the very existence of the modes of seeing undermines the reliability of a vision which is manipulated through the fragmentary, illusory and artificial eye of technology.

CINEMA

Of course, the ultimate device of optical fragmentation and illusion would also come into being at the close of the nineteenth century, and it would prove itself highly compatible with that most visual, fragmentary, and illusory of literary modes – the Gothic. The rise of cinema, more than anything that had gone before it, invoked the concept of legitimate spectatorship as a dominant cultural leisure-time activity, which is itself linked to the development of a consumer culture. Yet, the hard material nature of these facts coexists with an understanding of the cinematic image's birth as something magical in its ephemerality: as Skal puts it, "Never before had it been possible for human beings to create, reproduce, and share such evocative simulacrum of the dream state" (Skal 1994: 31). Just as the Gothic's penchant for tales of the amazing and the impossible had proven itself a powerful conduit for other visual interpretations, the dream-like and fantastical medium of cinema has demonstrated an undying fascination with the genre. And, like so many other visual medias' interactions with the Gothic, the cinema's trysts with the genre, from Georges Méliès' skeletal monsters to the cinematic outings of Tim Burton, have demonstrated the Gothic's exceptional capacity to inspire visual creativity, and the illimitable richness of the visual object.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1825) "The Dead Devoured by the Living," *The Terrific Register: Or, Record of Crimes, Judgments, Providences, and Calamities*, vol. 2, 737–39.
— (1866) "Sensational Literature," *London Review*, in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 June, 5.
Birkhead, B (2005) *The Tale of Terror*, Boston MA: IndyPublish.
Bowe, N.G. (1983) *Harry Clarke: His Graphic Art*, Mountrath: Dolmen Press.
Dickens, C. (1997) "The Demeanour of Murderers," 1856, in D. Pascoe (ed.) *Selected Journalism 1850–1870*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 477.
Iser, W. (2008) "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in D. Lodge and N. Wood (eds) *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 189–205.
Jackson, R. (1981) *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, London: Routledge.
Leroux, G. (2009) *The Phantom of the Opera*, 1911, trans. M. Ribière, London: Penguin.
Rafer, N. (1998) *Creating Born Criminals*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Ruskin, J. (1987) *Modern Painters*, 1843, ed. D. Parrie, London: Deutsch.

- Shelley, M. (2005) *Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, ed. H.H. Harper, Whitefish: Kessinger.
- Skal, D.J. (1994) *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, London: Plexus.
- Stevenson, R.L. (2008) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. R. Luckhurst
Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stoker, B. (1996) *Dracula*, 1897, eds N. Auerbach and D.J. Skal, New York: Norton.

FURTHER READING

- Barron, N. (ed.) (1999) *Fantasy and Horror: A Critical and Historical Guide to Literature, Illustration, Film, TV, Radio, and the Internet*, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press. (A comprehensive reference book covering primary and secondary fantasy and horror literature written from 1762 to 1998. Includes sections on illustration.)
- Bayer-Berenbaum, L. (1982) *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*, Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. (Explores the connection between Gothic literature and art by analyzing the characters, plots and settings in Gothic stories.)
- Bowe, N.G. (1983) *Harry Clarke: His Graphic Art*, Mountrath: The Dolmen Press. (An insightful and informative examination of the graphic art of one of the most significant illustrators of the weird and wonderful narratives.)
- Brake, L. and Demoor, M. (eds) (2009) *The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (A volume of articles exploring the subject of illustration in nineteenth-century periodicals. Examining the role of illustration technically, metaphorically and historically, the articles offer specific examples and theoretical approaches to the subject.)
- Hoeveler, D.L. (2011) "The Gothic Chapbook and the Urban Reader," in L.H. Peer (ed.) *Romanticism and the City*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 55–72. (An article discussing some principles of Gothic bluebooks and chapbooks, and how urban readers responded to them.)
- Sutton, D. (2000) *On the Fringe for Thirty Years: A History of Horror in the British Small Press*, Birmingham: Shadow. (An engaging seven-part volume reviewing the distinctive decades during which horror in the UK small press developed: 1965–95.)

CHAPTER THIRTY

GOTHIC THEATER, 1765–PRESENT

—♦—
Diego Saglia

With its assorted gasps, frissons, jumps and screams, “Gothic drama” or “theater” has been putting fear on stage and into spectators for over two-and-a-half centuries. Commenting on the first night of Matthew Gregory Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre* at Drury Lane in December 1797, the *Monthly Visitor* humorously warned readers that

Two or three ladies, in the boxes, absolutely fell into hysterics at the sight of Mrs [Jane] Powell, as the Ghost of Angela’s mother. And we would seriously caution ladies *in a certain way*, against seeing the representation of the Castle-Spectre.

(Anon. 1797: 538, emphasis in text)

In March 1803, when Harriet Litchfield performed Lewis’s monodrama afterpiece *The Captive* at Covent Garden, her acting affected the audience to such an extent that, as the author wrote to a correspondent, “a Man fell into convulsions in the Boxes . . . a Woman fainted away in the Pit” and “two or three more of the spectators went into hysterics” (quoted in Macdonald 2000: 160). Through their oscillations between mockery and earnestness, these anecdotes confirm affective power as one of the distinctive features of stage Gothic since at least the mid-eighteenth century, the time in which we may discern the emergence of a (more or less consistent) “Gothic drama.”

In general terms, the spectacular component is evidently central to the Gothic aesthetic: from architecture and fiction to the visual arts and cinema. Fictional Gothic, for instance, is conspicuously dramatic and theatrical. Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is structured like a tragedy, borrows from the opera and features long stretches of dialogue interspersed with what read like stage directions. In addition, it was adapted for the stage in Robert Jephson’s *The Count of Narbonne* (1781). In twentieth-century literature, the theatrical element of fictional Gothic is still fully visible in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), in which the Parisian “Théâtre des Vampires” (where the protagonist Louis meets the seductive Armand) treats unsuspecting audiences to real vampiric murders. In spite of the familiar presence of theater and theatricality in Gothic fiction, however, Gothic on

stage or gothically-inflected drama and theater have rarely received much sustained attention. This may be because, relying on sensationalism and aimed at quick consumption, plays constituted a quickly obsolescing theatrical fare that soon vanished from cultural memory. Another reason may be the relatively unstable status and lack of cohesion of the category of Gothic theater beyond a basic definition of “fear on stage.” Indeed, any attempt at a unifying description of Gothic drama or theater over such an extended period of time as “1765 to the present” seems irreparably doomed to fail.

In the simplest terms, a tentative definition may take its cue from Jeffrey Cox’s discussion of stage Gothic as a theatrical language of “the extreme” combined with sensationalism of a supernatural, psychological and political nature (Cox 1992: 7). This idiom characteristically mutates in accordance with the specific pressures of theatrical spaces, generic hierarchies, ideology, politics and social constraints, given that “the drama more than any other literary form is a social product” (Cox 1992: 8). Stage Gothic is also concerned with manifestations of aberrance and the uncanny, as well as the processes of “throwing off” attendant on abjection as the expulsion of abnormalities which individual or collective subjects refuse to face while delineating ostensibly coherent and unified identities. Metaphorically, abjection implies a removal from sight, the refusal to see and “contemplate” (that is, viewing and apprehending) what confronts us. Focusing on what we do not want to see but cannot help watching, Gothic represents the “uncontemplatable” through intertwined mechanisms of revelation and concealment. Drawing on this distinctive tendency, Gothic theater creates visible and tangible versions of the uncontemplatable. In this manifestation of the basic theatrical process of “ostension,” which Keir Elam defines as “the *showing* of objects and events” (Elam 2002: 26), the uncontemplatable appears out there, in front of us, in the performative arena of the stage.

In this context, this chapter seeks to avoid developmental narratives of stage Gothic. To be sure, it might be possible to sketch a broad history of this phenomenon, ranging from eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Gothic drama to Victorian melodrama and the formal pluralism and thematic explorations of the late-twentieth-century stage with its investigations of politics, the body and psychology, as well as its daring generic combinations and use of parody and camp. But whether this history may be of any real use is altogether doubtful. Predicated on obsolescence and replacement, it risks masking continuities of themes and techniques. It might also conceal the profoundly cross-cultural and international nature of stage Gothic. Indeed, Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre* was indebted to Schiller’s drama; Leopold Lewis’s *The Bells* (1871) was an adaptation of Erckmann and Chatrian’s *Le Juif polonais* (1869); originally written in German, Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade* (1964) is now an international masterpiece; and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s and Charles Hart’s *Phantom of the Opera* (1986), based on Gaston Leroux’s novel, is a prime instance of globalized theater.

Rather than aiming at an evolutionary tale dotted with historical subdivisions, then, this chapter privileges lines that cut across periods, genres and modes. For reasons of convenience, it focuses on works and performances from the English-language tradition, yet it also identifies a lexicon of features that may be pertinent to other traditions within the transnational continuum of stage Gothic. Its aim is to trace the outlines of a drama and theater that affect and disturb spellbound

audiences through constantly mutating, though essentially comparable, performances of horror and terror.

INTERSECTIONS

In its Romantic-period versions, Gothic on stage featured a variety of generic, modal and tonal intersections which invariably baffled its earliest commentators. Not merely a manifestation of the distinctive tendency to *bricolage* in popular culture, these admixtures also owed much to the late-eighteenth-century questioning and redistribution of inherited literary and dramatic typologies. From Horace Walpole's seminal *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) onward, stage Gothic has been characterized by generic mutations, convergences and subdivisions, a peculiarity which, for instance, still complicates critical attempts at distinguishing "Gothic drama" from melodrama. Simultaneously, this generic instability has awarded stage Gothic a degree of flexibility that has ensured its prolonged subsistence.

In the Romantic decades, Gothic elements appeared in works that might be classified as opera (Henry Siddons's *The Sicilian Romance*, 1794), comic opera (John

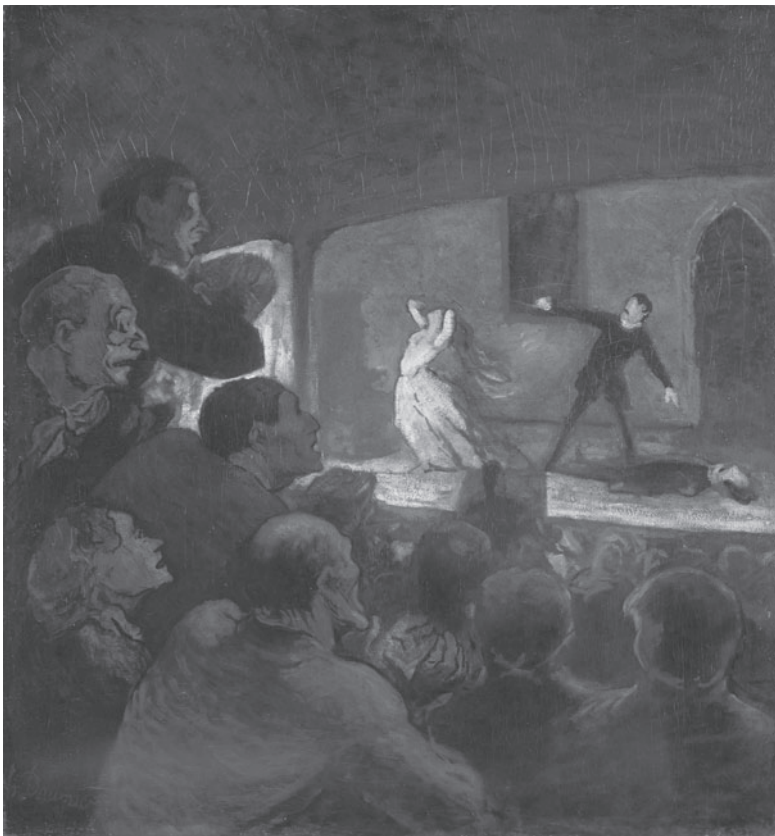


Figure 30.1 Honoré Daumier, *At the Theater (The Melodrama)* (c. 1860–64)

O’Keeffe’s *The Castle of Andalusia*, 1782), melodrama (Isaac Pocock’s *The Miller and His Men*, 1813), tragedy (Coleridge’s *Remorse*, 1813) or historical drama (Byron’s *The Two Foscari*, 1821, and Shelley’s *The Cenci*, 1819, 1821). In addition, audiences enjoyed the innumerable satirical revisions of high-cultural plots and figures in harlequinades, pantomimes and burlettas such as *Harlequin and Faustus, or The Devil Will Have his Own* (1796), *Don Giovanni, Or A Spectre on Horseback* (1817) and *Harlequin’s Vision, Or The Feast of the Statue* (1818). An impressively spectacular jumble, mid-to-late-eighteenth-century stage Gothic combined comedy and tragedy, as well as a host of devices of “legitimate” and “illegitimate” drama and theater. Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre* is an illuminating case in point, since the author explicitly invokes Shakespeare’s precedent in both the Prologue and Epilogue “To the Reader” in order to justify his introduction of comedic and farcical elements concentrated in the lower-class characters. Lewis’s epilogue, moreover, reveals his debt to Friedrich Schiller’s notorious *Die Räuber* and presents Franz Moor’s nightmare (Act V, scene 1) as a model for the villainous Osmond’s dream in his play. It also features such “illegitimate” traits as music, song and pantomimical acting. In particular, the apparition of the titular specter, that scandalized and terrified both spectators and commentators, required an accurate orchestration of special effects in a dumb show indebted to pantomime and optical tricks akin to those of the eidophusikon or the phantasmagoria.

Lewis’s interweaving of codes and devices also highlights the thin line separating melodrama from stage Gothic. Thomas Holcroft’s *A Tale of Mystery* (1802), the first text to be explicitly titled a melodrama, is filled with Gothic topoi, and employs music to mark the rhythm of the action and stress its key moments. This distinctive use of musical accompaniment resurfaced throughout the century, both in quickly consumed and soon forgotten works and in such epoch-making plays as Leopold Lewis’s *The Bells* (1871) where the protagonist’s sense of guilt intensifies to the sound of appropriately interspersed tunes. Music retains its hallmark function also in twentieth-century re-elaborations of nineteenth-century melodramatic plots such as the emblematic case of the murder of Maria Marten in 1827, a tale of true crime that gave rise to countless stage reinterpretations. A recent version such as Constance Cox’s *Maria Marten: Or, Murder in the Red Barn* (1969) elaborates popular retellings of the story of the poor village girl seduced, abandoned and eventually killed by the rich local landowner, William Corder. Here, too, emotively expressive tunes punctuate the text, and characters regularly break into song according to a carefully organized “music plot.”

The tendency of stage Gothic to develop into mixed forms partly explains the recent burgeoning of Gothic musicals: from Richard O’Brien’s *Rocky Horror Show* (1973) to Andrew Lloyd Webber’s and Charles Hart’s *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) or Webber’s, David Zippel’s and Charlotte Jones’s *Woman in White* (2004).

Premiered at the Theatre Upstairs of London’s Royal Court Theatre on June 19, 1973, *The Rocky Horror Show* (followed by Jim Sharman’s 1975 film adaptation) deploys a multifariously camp aesthetic characterized by citation, masquerade, hyperbole, inversion and kitsch visual presentation. These formal codes interact and collide in a text that throws a couple of young and wholesome Americans, with their conventional gendered and sexual identities, into the libido-driven chaos of a “castle” haunted by a gallery of disconcerting figures headed by Frank-n-Furter, the “sweet

transvestite from transsexual Transylvania” (O’Brien 1983: 11) who enjoys experimenting with human bodies. Described in the *dramatis personae* as “a cross between Ivan the Terrible and Cruella de Vil,” he embodies the camp crossovers that permeate the play as a potent, latter-day manifestation of Gothic’s inbuilt transgressive tendencies.

Rocky Horror is built on multiple intersections and cross-fertilizations, most visibly that between film and theater. As the author specifies, the decor must recall a “‘B’ movie cinema,” the stage is “covered with old cinema or ‘Odeon’ carpet” (O’Brien 1983: n.p.) and an usherette introduces the action by singing the opening (and closing) musical number. An initial scream pits the audience into an atmosphere combining suspense, fear and comic exaggeration, and paving the way for the play’s re-use of Gothic topoi: from the castle/laboratory to the overreaching scientist, the persecuted hero and heroine, mounting unease and the haunting figure of Eddie, a failed experiment eventually disposed of as a “bag of blood and gore” (O’Brien 1983: 25). Compounding this admixture through the pivotal musical numbers and borrowings from science-fiction B-movies, O’Brien draws on the constitutive Gothic propensity for dismantling and rearranging generic prerequisites to create a cult show that succeeds in breaking down the “fourth wall” and stimulating audience participation.

This penchant for combining miscellaneous materials also features in other contemporary examples of stage Gothic than those with predominantly musical configurations. A particularly significant interweaving of dissonant elements is Lucy Gough’s *Head* which reinvents John Keats’s poem *Isabella, Or the Pot of Basil* (1820). A radio play first broadcast by BBC Radio 4 on October 29, 1996, this text blends horror and terror by centering on the imprisonment of the female protagonist (Ella) in a tenement flat by her violent brother (Wolfskin) who murders her lover (Enzo, the Head). In keeping with Gothic admixtures, Gough combines a harrowing plotline with language-based humor and comedy. As Enzo’s head complains that it wants to be buried in the earth and not in a basil pot, Ella petulantly answers: “This is a tenement flat, I haven’t got any earth” (Gough 2000: 70). When she remonstrates, “You used to talk of love, now it’s only of death,” the Head answers “My language has changed like my smell,” while a fly insistently buzzes around it (Gough 2000: 70). Even as it debunks Gothic conventions, Gough’s black humor intensifies the horrifying potential of the putrefying head and its perturbing status as an abject figure that refuses to disappear. By alternately exorcizing and reinforcing “fear on stage,” *Head* testifies to the enduringly unsettling power of the intersection of genres, modes and tones that distinguishes stage Gothic.

BODIES

If the body is a major appurtenance of Gothic fiction (Bruhm 1994, Hurley 1996), it plays an even more specifically pivotal role in stage Gothic. As a primary site for the representation of the human form, theater constructs the (Gothic) body as an essential site for the *mise en scène* of fear, the textual/performative place where horror and terror are constructed and relayed to audiences.

As with early Gothic fiction, a specific physical economy emerges in early Gothic theater. A combination of vigor and lust, the villain’s body takes center stage,

together with his authority and energy. In contrast, the body of the hero often needs borrowed strength, as in the case of Percy, in *The Castle Spectre*, who hides inside a suit of armor (Act II, scene 1), or Louis's reliance on the law in James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* (1794: Act V, scene 2). The victimized, persecuted and objectified body of the heroine duly appears in play after play. Finally, irregular and aberrant bodies range from ghosts and specters to Frankenstein's Creature, which soon transferred to the stage in Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; Or, The Fate of Frankenstein* (1823).

This physical economy oscillates between the utter materiality of the body of the villain or monster, with their all-consuming instincts and appetites, through the hero's "armored" and prosthetic body, to the evanescent non-bodies of ghosts which,



Figure 30.2 Illustration to Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort*. From "De Monfort: A Tragedy in Five Acts," in *The British Theatre, Or, A Collection of Plays*, Vol. 24, 2nd ed. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816

nevertheless, retain such unsettling physical traits as voice in *Fontainville Forest*, a gaping wound in *The Castle Spectre* or the substantial presence of the specter Vanderdecken in Edward Fitzball's *The Flying Dutchman* (1827).

By literally placing the body in the limelight (aptly, a lighting technique invented in 1816 and used to “spot” individual performers), playwrights and directors make it a crucial repository of Gothic tensions. In consequence, its manifestations are invariably hyperbolic. In Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1800), the eponymous protagonist is seized by despair and “dashes his head against the wall” in a shockingly physical translation of his own inner turmoil and desire for self-annihilation (Figure 30.2).

Much more recently, in Danny Boyle's staging of Nick Dear's *Frankenstein* at London's National Theatre (2011), the macroscopic presence of the body was in full view, as, on entering the auditorium, spectators saw a gigantic disc suspended over an empty stage. Made of light bulbs, this pod or cocoon began pulsating at the sound of a heartbeat, thus turning into an enormous womb from which the Creature eventually tumbled out. And as the play comes to its conclusion, the two main characters (in Boyle's production, played by actors who exchanged roles on consecutive nights) are eventually reduced to as many bodies roaming an icy wasteland: the Creature's strong and resilient frame, and Frankenstein's increasingly weak physique, in constant need of sustenance.

These hyperbolic bodies throw light on a range of identifiably Gothic concerns: Titanic rebellion mingled with the defeat caused by an inexorable, self-inflicted fate, as in *De Monfort*'s case; in (Gothic) melodrama, the transformation of the body into a nexus of passions and affects eliciting a similar response from the audience; the decapitated head in Gough's play as a decomposing fragment of a lost unity which, by continuing to speak, haunts the female protagonist and dismantles notions of romantic love and devotion stronger than death; and, in Dear's and Boyle's *Frankenstein*, the heavily sutured Creature whose body encapsulates Mary Shelley's tale of a tragically fractured human condition.

Verging on evanescence and absence, the ghostly frame tests the limits of the physical economy of stage Gothic. A vanishing body that never completely disappears, the ghost was one of the most controversial appurtenances in late-eighteenth-century Gothic theater, at a time when Shakespeare's specters were seen as blasphemous relics of a superstitious past and no longer staged. Nonetheless, playwrights began to experiment with specters and acting companies to find technical solutions to the problem of performing a convincing non-physical body. Witness, for instance, Boaden's reflections (in his *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, 1826) on the creation of the ghost in *Fontainville Forest*, where he makes plain his preoccupation with the physical devices employed to conjure up the illusion of invisibility or, rather, half-visibility. At a more abstract level, Boaden voices his concern with the typically liminal status of the spectral – its position between the physical and the immaterial – which ultimately questions the solidity of the real.

A recent and extremely successful instance of a ghost play capitalizing on these themes and techniques is Stephen Mallatratt's adaptation of Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* (1989), which also stresses the need for an effective staging of its central specter. The stage direction concerning her first appearance specifies that “she suffers from some terrible wasting disease” and “the thinnest layer of flesh is tautly stretched across her bones, and her eyes seem sunken back into her head” (Mallatratt 1989:

20). On seeing this rather material apparition again, the character named Kipps describes her as a figure “whose form was quite substantial, yet –” (Mallatratt 1989: 28), this adversative suspension perfectly capturing the liminal condition of the spectral body. Through a careful use of special effects, the woman must be both visible and invisible, material and evanescent. As a very physical ghost still bearing traces of her ordeal in life, she cannot be seen by all the characters. Those who see her, however, experience her as a physical presence and, tellingly, Kipps praises the actress whom he thinks has been secretly hired to play this role. Also, through her materiality, the woman presides over the utterly physical death meted out by the play’s geography, as the quicksand around the haunted house swallows up imprudent bodies, while voices and sounds continue to echo as spectral traces of existences that cannot die away.

Stage Gothic physiques also convey pointedly political messages, as emerges, for instance, in recent plays employing Gothic motifs such as Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade*, Ariel Dorfman’s *Death and the Maiden* (1990) or Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* (1995). These works variously represent the Gothic body as the meeting point of political and historical faultlines, showing a preoccupation with physical dismemberment that also surfaces in other contemporary texts such as Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *The Love of the Nightingale* (1989) or Kane’s *Cleansed* (1998). If, in his theater of cruelty, Antonin Artaud aimed at staging bodies that would function as “living hieroglyphs” (Fischer-Lichte 2002: 296), these recent texts explicitly invoke the Gothic body as a material/semiotic encapsulation of the effects of political and historical violence. Thus, at center stage in *Marat/Sade* is Marat’s body, diseased with an incurable skin condition and slowly decomposing until Charlotte Corday’s *coup de grâce*. An epitome of the violence of the Revolution, this focal body is then surrounded by the cohort of disjointed and ill-treated physiques of the lunatics performing the play in Charenton’s asylum. In *Blasted*, instead, it is the body of the journalist Ian, who is raped and has his eyes gouged out by the Soldier, that functions as a gory map of the tortures inflicted during the Bosnian Civil War in the early 1990s, a context which Kane had in mind at the time of writing the play, including the inability of the media to report them and of western powers to respond adequately.

Although, at first, Dorfman’s *Death and the Maiden* may seem an unlikely candidate for a Gothic play, close scrutiny reveals its dependence on distinctly Gothic tropes and topoi. It features the triad of hero, heroine and villain; employs the female body as the pivot of the action; and conjures up a despotic regime which tortures those who oppose it in secret chambers. Dorfman makes the body the linchpin of the political tensions of a country (Chile, in this case) that seeks to evolve from a dictatorship to a democracy. Paulina is convinced that Roberto, a stranger who has helped her husband with a flat tyre, is her one-time captor and torturer. The physical signs are unmistakable: “I . . . recognise the skin. And the smell” (Dorfman 1991: 25). Tellingly, she summarizes her imprisonment as a time when “your body is falling apart” (Dorfman 1991: 39). In true Gothic fashion, incarceration and claustrophobia mark a body whose scars delineate a map of the country’s history. Furthermore, as Paulina proceeds to tie Roberto up and threaten him with torture, his body becomes the target of her revenge – “the only thing I want is to have him raped” (Dorfman 1991: 27) – and the battleground of a historical process where intolerably physical memories clash with demands for justice and the possibility of reconciliation.

Through an insistence on abused physiques, Dorfman offers an emblematic instance of how Gothic bodies on stage function as sites of a (possessed or desired) norm and of normality as the system built around it, as well as being materializations of the abject at its most nightmarishly tangible. Significant both as a physical entity and as a trope, this performed body is alternatively a symptom, a metonym or a synecdoche. Most visibly, it is the sign of a regime of horror and terror which overwhelms performing and spectating subjects alike.

MACHINES, SPACES, SILENCES

Stage Gothic tends to multiply space by making the “offstage” a cardinal location of in/visible actions and meanings, a process often requiring ad hoc machinery and staging techniques. Indeed, the perfecting of tricks such as (dis)appearances, shadows, explosions, fires and flashes owes much to the original links between stage Gothic and optical shows such as the magic lantern or the phantasmagoria. In turn, these techniques reinforce and expand the tendency of Gothic theater to transgress the divide between on- and offstage, visible and invisible, real and imaginary.

The representation of labyrinths, corridors and hidden passages is a case in point. If theater cannot actually show these spaces and their disorienting ramifications, it conjures them up *in absentia* through the offstage dimension and its destabilizing effect on the characters. In early Gothic, labyrinthine structures are powerfully intimated in *The Castle Spectre* (Osmond’s castle) and *Fontainville Forest* (the Abbey), as well as in *The Miller and His Men* with the underground rooms and passages used by the bandit-miller Grindoff and his acolytes. In these instances, the offstage is a non-place encapsulating other subversive and perturbing spaces. Equally relevant is the staging of spectrality and the spatial and technical practices aimed at rendering the crossing of boundaries between material and immaterial. Just as significant, then, are those devices that allow for superhuman transitions between on- and offstage, such as the “vampire trap” created for J.R. Planché’s *The Vampire; Or, The Bride of the Isles* (1820), which enabled the actor playing the vampire Lord Ruthven to vanish suddenly at the end of the play. Such mechanisms – another being the “Corsican trap” invented for Dion Boucicault’s *The Corsican Brothers* (1852) – shorten the distance between the two dimensions, enabling almost instantaneous transitions and thus contravening customary space-time rules. More importantly, these devices bring the “other” norms of the offstage into the space of (apparent) normality that is the onstage. In a contemporary revision of these techniques, the *Rocky Horror Show*, also set in a maze-like “Frankenstein mansion,” exploits the (comically) destabilizing potential of the on/offstage link, for instance, through the projection of videos of Frank-n-Furter having sex with Brad and Janet alternately which expose the viewer to a disconcerting effect of simultaneity.

Gough’s *Head* also offers a significant example of an on/offstage intersection mediated by technology. In this text, originally intended for radio, a door separates the flat where Wolfskin segregates Bella from a dystopian and lawless outside inhabited by the violent brother and hordes of cannibalistic vagrants (“It’s dangerous out there . . . The lift might get stuck, the beggars will eat you. You are safe here,” he tells her [Gough 2000: 58]). Eventually Bella rebels, removes the wolf skin from her

brother and throws him outside, where “the beggars . . . will eat [him]” (Gough 2000: 78). She then wraps the head up in the pelt to take it back to the forest and bury it again. Loading the offstage with nightmarish overtones as a space of removal and abjection, the play produces a fascinatingly multiple space. As a radio play, it inhabits a “non-stage” made up of virtual locales which, nonetheless, follow the norms of on/offstage spatiality. Moreover, it makes clear how the unsettling power of the offstage lies precisely in its status as a radically imaginary multiple dimension: an inexistent “out there.” Thus, *Head* provides a convincing case for recognizing the on/offstage intersection in stage Gothic as a peculiar locus of transgressions, subversions and the constant return of the abject.

The relevance of the offstage in Gothic theater is also related to its distinctive use of absences and gaps. It defines the Gothic stage as the site of an elliptical semiosis, a production of meaning that proceeds through discontinuities and, particularly, silences. Oscillating between the real and the metaphorical, these silences may take the form of withheld information, muteness, narrative blanks, partial or willfully misleading viewpoints, mysteries or the breakdown of language. Therein resides another crucial aspect of the fear-inducing potential of stage Gothic.

The “first” Gothic play, Walpole’s *Mysterious Mother*, revolves around one central unspoken fact, incest, the revelation of which is delayed until the tragic finale. Similarly, Holcroft’s *Tale of Mystery* revolves around the protagonist’s muteness which, inhibiting the provision of information, plunges the audience into a void of knowledge that the play only gradually, yet never entirely, dispels. Melodramatic muteness (Brooks 1995: 56–80) also prefigures the disquieting lack of speech of *Frankenstein’s* Creature. Nick Dear’s 2011 version gives this “silence” a twofold inflection: first, the Creature’s initially guttural and meaningless utterances, and then, after he has learnt language, his relapse into such non-communication when fury overcomes him.

Yet again, Dorfman’s *Death and the Maiden* usefully exemplifies these different forms of the interface between the spoken and the unspoken. Focusing on silence, this text is tellingly dedicated to Harold Pinter, a master orchestrator of the unsaid. In it, Gerardo, the husband, works for the presidential commission tasked with “voicing” the silenced experiences of the victims of the former dictatorship. These, however, are precisely the memories that his wife Paulina cannot articulate and to which they refer as “things.” When she eventually confronts Roberto, the supposed torturer, he denies any responsibility and remains silent. But, when threatened and forced to speak, he confesses his crimes to a tape recorder that is a more contemporary version of the truth-bearing documents typical of Gothic (Francisco’s letter in *A Tale of Mystery* or the manuscript found by Adeline in *Fontainville Forest*, for instance). Roberto’s narrative expresses the unspeakable, fills up all the gaps, and thus seemingly neutralizes silence. Nonetheless, with a disconcertingly ironic move, the character later denies the truthfulness of this document (“That confession . . . It’s false” [Dorfman 1991: 43]). As revelation reverts to silence, the play firmly reinstates a gap at its center.

In the end, this confessional ordeal does not disclose or clarify anything. Spectators will never know if Paulina is imagining or whether Roberto really was her persecutor. In the final coda, the three characters meet again at a formal evening. Paulina and Roberto stare silently at each other across a concert room. The only voice is that

of Roberto, who rolls off the usual list of pieties about reconciliation and forgiveness; yet the real, and deeply disturbing, message is in the silence between “victim” and “torturer,” as this is ultimately a play about the uselessness of confession and revelation.

In a text such as Dorfman’s, which never completely dispels its central enigma, silence represents the impossible completion of the cycle of abjection. For the abject, in this case the uncontemplatable pain of torture, returns to haunt us through a silence that cannot be neutralized. Moreover, Dorfman’s play stresses how, through silence, stage Gothic creates a bond of contradictory complicity with the audience. It places viewers in a position of apparent knowledge (and safety) which it repeatedly undermines by invoking the unsaid. This exposure to the unsettling power of silence contributes to placing spectators and characters together within an uncontrollable, and thus doubly disturbing, script of horror and terror.

As David Punter has suggestively noted, in Gothic “what we see is always haunted by something else, by that which has not quite been seen” (Punter 2000: x). Gothic is an inherently visual aesthetic that aims to unsettle its recipients by constantly suggesting that their vision is incomplete, distorted or misleading. Stage Gothic capitalizes on and literalizes this premise, while also exploring its metaphorical and symbolic import. Gothic theater is a full-blown manifestation of Gothic’s inbuilt performativity, which, through its distinctive admixtures, intersections and repeated remediations, exposes its viewers to non-resolutive narratives of abjection.

The textual and performative examples examined here delineate a varied range of ways of seeing and communicating, organizing cultural categories (such as genres) or experiencing the body. Located between the dramatic page and the space of performance, stage Gothic is a continuum punctuated by variations that starts in the eighteenth century and reaches up to the present, where it intersects with developments of Gothic’s performative and visual potential in the new media. As it forces us to face the uncontemplatable, yet also embeds it into the semiotic gaps of silence and mystery, Gothic theater literalizes, objectifies and embodies fear, its causes and attributes, and simultaneously continues to explore its inexhaustibly suggestive and troubling abstract meanings.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1797) “The Drama: Drury Lane,” *Monthly Visitor, and Pocket Companion*, 2: 536–38.
- Brooks, P. (1995) *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, 1976, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bruhm, S. (1994) *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cox, J.N. (ed.) (1992) *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Dorfman, A. (1991) *Death and the Maiden*, London: Nick Hern Books.
- Elam, K. (2002) *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, London: Routledge.
- Gough, L. (2000) *Crossing the Bar, Head, Our Lady of Shadows*, ed. B. Mitchell, Bridgend: Seren.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2002) *History of European Drama and Theatre*, trans. J. Riley, London: Routledge.

- Hurley, K. (1996) *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the fin de siècle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macdonald, D.L. (2000) *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Mallatratt, S. (1989) *The Woman in Black: A Ghost Play*, adapted from the book by S. Hill, London: Samuel French.
- O'Brien, R. (1983) *The Rocky Horror Show*, London: Samuel French.
- Punter, D. (2000) "Introduction: The Ghost of a History," in D. Punter (ed.) *A Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell, viii–xiv.
- Reno, R.P. (1984) "James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew G. Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*: Challenges of the Supernatural Ghost on the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 9: 95–106.

FURTHER READING

- Backscheider, P.R. (1993) *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (On eighteenth-century Gothic drama, its socio-political relevance and theatrical renditions.)
- Bernard-Griffiths, S. and Sgard, J. (eds) (2000) *Mélodrames et romans noirs 1750–1890*, Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail. (Essays in French on Gothic fiction and the stage in France and Britain.)
- Brooks, P. (1995) *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, 1976, New Haven: Yale University Press. (A fundamental study of melodrama as a dramatic and narrative mode.)
- Crochunis, T.C. (2001) "Writing Gothic Theatrical Spaces," *Gothic Studies* 3: 156–69. (On the rhetoric of space in early Gothic drama.)
- Inverso, M. (1990) *The Gothic Impulse in Contemporary Drama*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press. (A provocative study of Gothic themes and structures in recent British and American drama.)
- McEvoy, E. (2007) "Contemporary Gothic Theatre," in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, eds C. Spooner and E. McEvoy, London: Routledge, 214–22. (A stimulating examination of the affective mechanisms in recent Gothic theater.)
- Ranger, P. (1991) "Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast": *Gothic Drama in the London Patent Theatres, 1750–1820*, London: The Society for Theatre Research. (On the decor, acting and staging techniques in early Gothic theater.)
- Saglia, D. (2012) " 'I Almost Dread to Tell You': Gothic Melodrama and the Aesthetic of Silence in Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery*," *Gothic Studies*, 14: 93–106. (An extended reading of silence and the politics thereof in early Gothic theater.)
- and Silvani, G. (eds) (2005) *Il teatro della paura: scenari gotici del romanticismo europeo*, Roma: Bulzoni. (Essays in Italian and English on Gothic drama and theater in Romantic-period Europe.)
- Taylor, G. (1989) *Players and Performances in the Victorian Theatre*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Contains useful references to Victorian Gothic plays.)
- Worrall, D. (2007) "The Political Culture of Gothic Drama," in D. Punter (ed.) *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 148–59. (On political subtexts in Romantic-period Gothic plays.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

GHOSTS, MONSTERS AND SPIRITS, 1840–1900



Alexandra Warwick

The ghosts, monsters and spirits of the Victorians are still with us. They continue to haunt and speak to us even though more than a century has passed. The Victorians were obviously not the first people to encounter ghosts and monsters, but they encountered them in very particular ways, ways that were shaped by the conditions in which they lived, and which, in turn, re-figured understanding of those conditions. Many of these particularly Victorian forms are the ones still present in twenty-first-century culture. The neo-Victorianism of our own times does not return to the social-problem novel, or to the Reform Acts, but to the nineteenth-century “Others” found in public spectacle, popular culture and genre fiction. While these returns focus upon the oddness, the apparent strangeness of Victorian culture, it is not because of its difference but its familiarity. It is familiar because the Victorians used their monsters, ghosts and spirits to negotiate the unprecedented changes they witnessed: the transition to capitalist industrial modernity that transformed their world. Possibly the intensity of recent neo-Victorianism is a response to the ruin of that world, the perishing of its material structures, while the present is still convulsed by the workings of invisible forces.

An account of ghosts, monsters and spirits in the nineteenth century is in many ways also an account of materiality and its understanding. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the material, in the form of the human-made rather than the natural, became more and more insistently present. From the mills, factories and railways that changed the landscape, to the rapid urbanization and the creation of large cities, to the filling of even modest homes with “stuff” cheaply produced and readily available, the solidly material filled the horizons of the nineteenth century. At the same time we see the rise in interest in the “beyond”: that which is somehow outside the boundaries of the material and manifested in phenomena such as the increased popularity of ghost stories, the craze for mesmerism and the spread of spiritualism. This, however, is not a simple counter-reaction. Just as eighteenth-century Gothic does not emerge against the dominant philosophies of reason and scientific rationalism but from *within* those philosophies themselves, so Victorian materiality and immateriality are not simple opposites but productive of each other in complex ways. As Nature comes further under the domination of humanity,

enquiry into its workings intensifies. The nineteenth century sees the formalization and professionalization of the sciences and the extension of modes of scientific investigation into all areas, but at the same time the apparent existence of the supernatural questions the validity of knowledge itself. Catherine Crowe's very popular book, *The Night Side of Nature* (1848), is subtitled "Ghosts and Ghost Seers," but is a heterogeneous mix of accounts of apparitions, discussions of dreams and trances, doppelgängers, poltergeists, the afterlife, ancient magic and the power of the will. She states clearly in the introduction that

in undertaking to treat of the phenomena in question, I do not propose to consider them as supernatural; on the contrary I am persuaded that the time will come, when they will be reduced strictly within the bounds of science.

(Crowe 1852: 11)

Crowe also notes that

what we call *seeing* is merely the function of an organ . . . and so limited are its powers, that we are surrounded by many things which we cannot see without the aid of artificial appliances, and many other things which we cannot see even with them.

(Crowe 1852: 17–18)

In this she indicates an important element in any account of ghosts, monsters and spirits: the emergence of new ways of seeing and new regimes of vision in the nineteenth century. Technology was changing what it was possible to see; the fashion for microscopy showed worlds previously beyond human empirical verification. The photograph, too, began to record what the eye could not see, like Edward Muybridge's pictures of galloping horses, as well as to perform what looked like magic: to stop time and to preserve the dead. Optical technology also enhanced entertainment; magic lantern shows, phantasmagoria, dioramas, panoramas and eidophusikons were popular all over the country, but they were only part of the great numbers of different kinds of spectacles available to the public and catering to "the desire to be amused or instructed, the indulgence of curiosity and sheer sense of wonder" (Altick 1978:1). Many nineteenth-century public entertainments were jumbled mixtures; they could include almost anything, from live exhibits of people or exotic animals, fossils, paintings or mummies, to enormous cheeses, diving bells or microscopes. As well as the more professional and spectacular displays in large venues, there were many smaller, temporary shows. For example, in Whitechapel, East London, in 1888, a shop that had previously been a pawnbroker's, an undertaker's and a green-grocer's housed a show consisting of a black dwarf, a fat lady, an armadillo, some snakes and waxwork figures of the victims of Jack the Ripper (Williams 1894: 6–11).

MONSTERS AND FREAKS

Monsters are a notable feature of Victorian spectacle. The word "monster" derives from the Latin word *monstrare*, meaning to show, and the English word "demonstrate" recalls its earlier meanings of display: to prove by visual means and to

exemplify. The monster, in the form of the aberrant body, has always signified a range of cultural meanings. For centuries, the *lusus naturae*, the sport of nature, has been an object of curiosity, fear or veneration, particularly when it occurs in the human. Ancient Greek and Roman authors presented interpretations of monsters and the monstrous that, after their rediscovery in the European Renaissance, continued to influence western cultural ideas on the subject through to the end of the seventeenth century. Aristotle's *On the Generation of Animals* published in the fourth century BCE has a long section "Of Monsters" that speculates on the causes of monstrosity. Early Christian theologians like St Augustine also considered the place of the aberrant in God's plan. In the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, certain well-known figures, like the monster of Ravenna, were seen as religious or political portents. Most had some real initial existence in humans or animals born with radical physical differences, but were more widely known through dissemination in print and popular mythology. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, monsters came to be important test-cases in the developing views of the natural world and its laws, and in the continuing question of the relation of that natural world to God. In simple terms, the question was whether monsters were purposely made by Nature and/or by God, or whether they were mistakes.

The monster assumed a scientized version of earlier forms in its use for both display and education, as the emphasis in eighteenth-century medical and scientific study was on the principle of instruction from aberration rather than from normality. Scientific monsters appeared in many forms: preserved specimens, anatomical models, casts, wax figures, drawings and skeletons as well as living beings. Since Foucault, studies have pointed to the instability of any strict division between the instructional and the voyeuristic, particularly in matters of gender (see Jordanova 1989), and in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there is often little to distinguish the collections of medical researchers like John Hunter from freak shows. Indeed, many freaks made their way from living performance in shows to dead exhibition in medical collections. The "Irish Giant" Charles Byrne earned his living in shows but always feared that he would be "collected" after his death, as indeed he was when John Hunter bought his body for £500 in 1783.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the freak show was a large part of the entertainment industry. Previous generations had mostly only heard stories of monsters or seen them in print, but the increased mobility of the Victorian public on the new transport systems meant that many more saw them for real. Steamships and railways also meant that showmen could bring people from all parts of the world and no longer had to rely on local performers. The most famous of these Victorian freaks was Joseph Merrick, "The Elephant Man," who was born in 1862, and who at a young age developed severe physical abnormalities. As an adult he worked in unskilled jobs, but was living in a workhouse before he began to appear on show in London in 1884. His showplace was opposite the London Hospital where Frederick Treves was a doctor and, after some misfortunes in the show business, Treves took Merrick to live in the Hospital. Merrick remained there until his death in 1890. Treves sought to protect Merrick from "vulgar" public exhibition, but he allowed medical professionals and high-society visitors, like the Princess of Wales, to see Merrick while he was alive. After his death his skeleton and casts of his body were set up in the Hospital's pathology collection. Merrick's story was documented by his

first showman, Tom Norman, who insisted that he gained dignity from his ability to earn his living, and by Treves, who argued that he had saved Merrick from misery. There were clearly conflicting ideas about Merrick's career at the time, and recent studies have argued that some freaks enjoyed much greater agency and control of themselves and their work than has previously been thought, casting doubt on the assumption that the relation between freaks and their intermediaries was one of simple exploitation (see Durbach 2010).

There were hundreds of freaks who were exhibited as examples of physical difference, and the names given to many of them – Lion-Faced Boy, Lobster Claw Lady, Leopard Boy, Bear Lady, Frog Man – testify to their perceived liminal human/animal status. Increasingly, too, people were shown as examples of racial difference: as savages, cannibals or the last survivors of lost civilizations. The heyday of the freak show, from around 1850 to the beginning of the First World War, coincides exactly with both the period of most intense debate about the origin of the human species and the growth of Britain's empire. Thus it could be argued that, as well as appealing to voyeuristic curiosity, the freak shows were part of a public engagement with the debates about the history and variety of humanity. Charles Darwin was fascinated by John Hunter's collection. In 1838 he speculated on what he called Hunter's Law: that monsters were themselves governed by recognizable laws and principles. Early in his career he believed that the monster represented a sudden developmental jump to a new form. Darwin eventually moved away from this idea, and his *Origin of Species* (1859) argues that change is only gradual and that evolution proceeds through slow processes. After Darwin, new formulations of ideas of heredity come to assume critical importance. Darwin's original term was "evolution through natural selection," and in the *Origin of Species* he carefully avoids speculation on the human. On the first page, however, he acknowledges Herbert Spencer's coinage of the term "survival of the fittest" to describe evolution. With Spencer's term a moral weightedness emerges, and very quickly other thinkers, such as Thomas Huxley, shift the idea of evolution from a biological to a sociological analysis, in which heredity comes to include social characteristics, such as drunkenness or sexual immorality, and the idea of natural selection is widened to inform a critique of contemporary conditions. In this there is a return to much older ideas about the relation between the exterior form of the body and the interior type of the character, and the monster again is used as the figure of the portent of disaster, this time of degeneration and social collapse.

The post-Darwinian monster is subtler than the show freak, and more threatening too. In the work of Darwin's cousin Francis Galton or the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, the monstrosity is thought to lie within. In the thousands of photographs they took of convicted criminals, the tiny signs of particular formations of the ear or angles of the jaw or eyebrow are the indications of moral monstrosity: the propensity to murder, rape or arson. By this time, the monster that is most feared is the invisible one, the man whose apparently normal exterior hides psychological deformity. By the 1860s, for the first time in history, more people lived in urban than rural areas, and as the known community of rural life gave way to the alienation of city life, the Victorians came to be more fearful and suspicious of those unknown "Others" among them. The hysterical high point of this is perhaps the Whitechapel murders of 1888, where the terrible killings of several prostitutes produced a

sensational outpouring of speculation about the perpetrator, dubbed Jack the Ripper by the press and variously thought to be a Jew, a mad butcher, a “savage” performer from Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, a local gang, a degenerate medical student, an upper-class sex-tourist, or even the actor playing Jekyll and Hyde on stage in the West End. As the term “monster” was the one most frequently used to describe Jack the Ripper, we can see how widely it had travelled, to be so easily identified with class, racial and ethnic difference and for that social difference to be aligned with interior mental deformity. With the development of the sciences of the mind in the latter part of the nineteenth century, advancing further ideas of possible psychological derangements, the Victorian monster of the *fin de siècle* is more likely to be the stranger in the crowd than the freak in the sideshow.

GHOSTS

Like monsters, ghosts have a long history. The spirits of the dead in classical literature are often in possession of a knowledge that is greater than that of the living, and they appear or are summoned to convey that knowledge. The *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* contain several appearances by spirits who offer guidance, as well as featuring the wandering spirits who have not yet found their way to the afterlife. These functions – guiding, warning and simply wandering – re-appear in accounts throughout the centuries. The best-known ghost in western culture, the ghost of Hamlet’s father, appears for another familiar function, the indication of undiscovered crime and the plea for revenge. Sasha Handley asserts that ghosts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries continue to have similar functions to the ghost of Old Hamlet, frequently embodying “principles of social justice,” in which the intervention of the ghost produces the punishment of crime or the recognition of the need for moral reformation (Handley 2007: 66). The Methodist movement of the late eighteenth century emphasized the material reality of angels, devils and ghosts, and these ghosts too conformed to the pattern of moral instruction. In these later forms the ghost is always a figure with a single purpose of revelation or warning, and always either the victim or the perpetrator of some past misdeed, locked into a repetitive cycle of haunting return until released by expiation.

Ghosts proliferate in the Victorian period, but there is an important distinction to be made between the “real” ghosts of witness accounts and those of fiction or performance. In the kinds of spectacles already discussed, the ghost became a special feature as optical technologies advanced. Magic lantern shows were able to create simple animations, and the appearance and disappearance of spectral figures became a familiar element in such performances. The most famous theatrical phantom was Pepper’s Ghost, an illusion created by projected light and large glass plates that allowed spectral figures to appear among real people on stage. The illusion was invented by Henry Dircks, but John Pepper, the proprietor of the Royal Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street, the site of many other scientific exhibitions and entertainments, quickly realized that the trick could be adapted and made practical to show in theatres. He incorporated the illusion into a dramatization of Charles Dickens’s story “The Haunted Man” and showed it in 1862 to immediate and sensational success. He repeated the illusion in further dramatic performances and other theaters soon followed with ghosts of their own.

“The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain” (1848) was the fifth and last of Dickens’s series of Christmas stories that had begun with *A Christmas Carol* in 1843. The reinvention of Christmas traditions by the Victorians is well known, and Dickens’s work was a crucial part of this. The Christmas ghost became so much a part of Victorian culture that in 1883 the compiler of *A Ghostly Annual* could comment, “I will not stop to enquire why it is that at Christmas-time one always feels to want something ‘uncanny’, but admitting the fact, I direct my efforts to satisfy this natural craving” (quoted in Davies 2010: 4, 248). This apparently “natural craving” was in fact largely produced by the work of Dickens.

The communal, “traditional” reception of Dickens’s stories points to the eventual fate of the “real” ghost in the nineteenth century, where it gradually becomes relegated to folk culture. This real ghost is a figure of communality, part of an oral culture of story telling. In the tales ghosts appear to individuals, but their message is received and understood by the social group. In tale telling, ghosts are always rooted and local, they are of a particular place, they have appeared to someone known to the teller if not the teller herself. These tales, too, are often fixed in feudal structures of family and social relations. The principle of social justice is comfortingly repeated: inheritances are restored, murderers brought to light and jilted lovers relieved of their sorrow. Repetition reached the point of over-familiarity, however, and Dickens himself remarked that ghosts were “reducible to a very few general types and classes; for, ghosts have little originality, and ‘walk’ in a beaten track” (Dickens 1912: 12). As the old social structures change under the pressure of urbanization, the ghosts become less and less meaningful, until, by the end of the century, Andrew Lang could remark:

the modern ghost is a purposeless creature. He appears nobody knows why; he has no message to deliver; no secret crime to reveal; no appointment to keep, no treasure to disclose, no commissions to be executed, and, as an almost invariable rule, he does not speak, even if you speak to him.

(Lang 1894: 95)

Lang goes on to say that true stories are “not the type of the magazine story” and that such stories “have spoiled us for ghosts” (Lang 1894: 136–37). Real and fictional ghosts diverge over the course of the century in response to the changing conditions of industrial modernity. The ghost of the oral tale lingers as a remnant, part of a fantasy of the communality that has been lost in the transition from traditional rural life to urban industrialism. The Christmas family circle of the Victorian bourgeois home is the contemporary performance of that fantasy of communality, but the ghost, no longer the agent of social justice, is merely a seasonal decoration.

Lang was a folklorist, and his interest in ghosts betrays where they were to be found by the 1890s: in folklore and in anthropology. By this time the ghost does not have a specific function; it is just a reminder of the past in general, of the previous existence of other ways of life in which it did have meaning. Real ghost stories become an element of folklore, collected as examples of vanishing practices alongside dialects and country dancing. As anthropology develops and the belief systems of other cultures are studied in greater detail, belief in ghosts and spirits is often identified as primitive or child-like, and figures as one of the ways in which imperial ideology

sought to assert the superiority of the “civilized” races. Its persistence in the “civilized” society of Victorian Britain was frequently similarly denigrated, though in texts like the Anglo-Indian supernatural tales of Rudyard Kipling we can see a more complex and anxious exploration of what precisely “civilized” beliefs might be.

The real ghost also increasingly becomes not the conveyor of information but an object of information in itself, a piece of data in scientific inquiry, as the examination of the world through scientific method comes to take in apparently supernatural phenomena. The emergence of scientific disciplines in the nineteenth century was to some extent a struggle over cultural authority in which subjects like phrenology, mesmerism and animal magnetism were battlegrounds where debates about scientific knowledge, practice and the nature of evidence took place. Ghosts were entangled in these struggles, not in questions of what they might mean, but in questions of their chemical and physical constitution.

While the real ghost becomes a “purposeless creature” in folklore or scientific enquiry, it could be argued that the fictional ghost is deeply engaged with the powerful invisible forces animating its contemporary culture. Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* (1994) takes the opening line from Marx’s Communist Manifesto – “a spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism” (Derrida 1994: 4) – and develops a philosophical and political analysis of the paradox of spectrality, of simultaneous being and non-being. From this a critical field of hauntology has developed, a theoretical orientation which has often come to be related to the Gothic, not least because of the vocabulary of ghosts, vampires and walking corpses that Marx deploys in describing capitalism. Peter Osborne discusses Marx’s “gothic literary imaginary” in presenting capitalism as possessed by pre-modern forms but emphasizes that “unlike in the gothic, these forms are not *residues* or *remnants* of earlier feudal forms, persisting, lurking repressed beneath the surface of modernity. They are the effects of the most advanced economic form itself: capitalism” (Osborne 2005: 16–17).

Victorian ghost stories can thus be seen as engaging with the new world in which the invisible force is the occluded labor of the worker and all social relations have become abstracted, spectral, in the dominance of the money economy. Dickens’s Christmas stories can then be read in a different fashion. His “A Christmas Tree” (1850) opens with an image of a tree hung with an improbable number of different mass-produced toys and trinkets representing all the commodity clutter of the bourgeois home including, in miniature, even its furniture: “French-polished tables, chairs, bedsteads, wardrobes, eight-day clocks, and various other articles of domestic furniture (wonderfully made, in tin, at Wolverhampton)” (Dickens 1912: 3). These toys produce real horror in his subsequent reveries, but the final third of the story consists of a series of scraps of traditional ghost stories. These are hackneyed and familiar, and Dickens does not even bother to fill them out; rather, they remain the barest sketches of tales and evince no fear or horror at all. The deadly pale young female ghost is far less frightening than the objects of commodity capitalism.

SPIRITS

The spirit is a rather different phenomenon from the ghost, and in many ways, the fullest invention of the Victorians. By the end of the nineteenth century the spirit and

the spirit world were very fully described and theorized, not necessarily coherently or without quite radical differences, but nevertheless very widely conceptualized. The Victorian spirit changes completely from the elemental, natural figure of an older tradition. Such figures become fairies, sprites and leprechauns and are absorbed into the academic taxonomies of folklore studies. Victorian spirits are emphatically human and almost invariably known to those who encounter them. Spirits, like ghosts, are embroiled in the question of the material, and, like monsters, are also indicators of changing scopic regimes. Most importantly, they are the central actors in spiritualism.

Spiritualism begins as a ghost story of an ordinary sort. In 1848, the Fox sisters, Katherine and Margaret, aged twelve and thirteen, lived in a reputedly haunted house in rural New York State. They experienced strange knocking and rapping noises which transpired to come from the ghost of a murdered peddler buried in the cellar. Where the story almost immediately becomes different is that the sisters communicated with the ghost, by asking it questions, and to which it replied through a simple code of raps. From their encounter with the peddler, the sisters became a national sensation. Within a few years thousands of people in the United States were practicing table rapping, and by 1852 the spirit séance had arrived in England and spiritualism quickly became widespread (Owen 1989: 18).

Where the Victorian ghost is largely a speechless phenomenon, signifying only by its presence, the spirit is eagerly communicative, even loquacious. It is also without portent; although it sometimes brings warnings, it is dialogic and conversational rather than annunciatory. The folk ghost is of and from the past, a simple and repetitive loop in time, replaying the crime or accident of its death and wanting no more than non-existence, to be released from the cycle. Like the shift in the location of the Gothic novel from the European feudal (Catholic) past to the modern English middle-class home, the Victorian spirit is noticeably domestic and of the present. The communicating spirits are always known, usually family members or friends, and the great majority of séances took place in the homes of the medium or of one of the sitters. The spirit is in and of the present and wishes to remain there. They are often well informed about current events, and their knowledge of the thoughts and actions of living family members and friends is also up-to-date. More strangely, they themselves are not static; they grow and develop. The spirit children of the Theobald family, for example, some of whom were stillborn or died in early infancy, learned to talk and write and were even able to discuss the theological implications of the Immaculate Conception (Owen 1989: 93).

The spirit was also accompanied by increasing materiality. Early spirit communication is mostly just sound, developing from knocking and rapping to speech and singing, but during the 1850s and 1860s spirits are able to move large objects, like furniture, and to produce items such as flowers, fruit and musical instruments. By the 1870s spiritualism had become a spectacular theatrical mode in which fully materialized spirits could appear and move about the séance room, touching or even kissing the sitters. The desire to see, or on the part of the medium, to produce the spirit may have been influenced by the successful and popular production of illusions like *Pepper's Ghost*. Those who fully materialized were not often family members but other spirits, the "controls" of the medium who acted as marshals to the eager dead wishing to speak to their relatives. There were very practical reasons for this: since almost every medium was eventually exposed as fraudulent it is

obvious there were serious limitations on their ability to appear as recognizable persons. Indeed, in looking at photographs of materialized spirits like Katie King, who was one of the well-known medium Florence Cook's controls, the resemblance between medium and spirit is very close indeed. Cook materialized other spirits, including a man, all of whom looked very much like her. Alex Owen suggests that full-body materialization came to an end in the 1880s as theatre and its conventions of representation changed, as did opportunities for young women with a desire for public performance. (Owen 1989: 73). Critics like Owen have long recognized the opportunities that mediumship offered people to go beyond the narrow expectations of their class and gender, and the forms of alternative community that spiritualism provided (see also Oppenheim 1985, Barrow 1986).

By the 1880s spirits are very different from the real ghosts of the 1840s, and from the fictional ones that continued to appear. There is no fear associated with the spirit: séances attempted to create an atmosphere of tension and expectation but within a rather rigid grammar of performance. It is that grammar that legitimizes the enactments of desire or of challenge to gender and class roles, and the most shocking moments in séances seem to have come when the rules of performance were breached. Descriptions of incidents of spirit grabbing – when skeptics would try to seize the materialized form – are often disturbing, frequently quite violent and sometimes resulting in injuries to the medium.

Although the fraudulent practices of Cook and her fellow mediums were revealed, many people continued to believe in their genuine abilities. Sir William Crookes, an eminent scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society, was a patron of Cook and never gave up his faith in mediumship and other paranormal phenomena. In the 1870s Crookes began systematic scientific testing of these phenomena and concluded in his report in 1874 that there was sufficient evidence that they were not tricks and deserved further investigation. Further investigation came in an organized form with the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. Members included scientists, writers and other public figures and consisted of believers and skeptics alike; indeed, the founding principle was that membership “does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other than those recognized by Physical Science” (Society for Psychical Research 1882: 5). Six committees were formed to investigate mesmerism, thought-transference, mediumship, “Odic force,” apparitions and haunted houses, and the investigators collected large amounts of written and photographic data, as well as material substances, like the ectoplasm produced by mediums. One of the founders of the Society, Frederic Myers, coined the term “telepathy,” and it is perhaps in these two phenomena, ectoplasm and telepathy, that we can see most clearly the context of the end of the century. Ectoplasm is the material of the spirit world extruded into this one, and its soggy, abject nature testifies to the exhaustion of fleshly human matter and signifies a complex anxiety about the nature and place of the human. The metamorphic monsters of *fin-de-siècle* fiction represent the abhuman, the human subject ruined and violently re-made by Victorian culture. At the same time, telepathy appears to allow the human to transcend the grossly material, to allow communication across time and space by the manipulation of invisible forces. But by the end of the century such communication really was possible: telephone and radio could transmit the voices of the living and the

phonograph the voices of the dead, and the human became just another haunted machine. In the 1890s the first moving films were shown to the public, while in Vienna Sigmund Freud had published the founding texts of psychoanalysis. The ghosts, monsters and spirits that the Victorians had made pass into those twentieth-century chambers of dreams: the cinema and the unconscious.

REFERENCES

- Altick, R. (1978) *The Shows of London*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap.
- Barrow, L. (1986) *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebians 1850–1910*, London: Routledge.
- Crowe, C. (1852) *The Night Side of Nature: Or, Ghosts and Ghost Seers*, London: Routledge.
- Davies, O. (2010) *Ghosts: A Social History*, 4 vols, London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf, London: Routledge.
- Dickens, C. (1912) *Christmas Stories*, London: Chapman and Hall.
- Durbach, N. (2010) *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Handley, S. (2007) *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England*, London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Jordanova, L. (1989) *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine*, Brighton: Harvester.
- Oppenheim, J. (1985) *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England 1850–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Osborne, P. (2005) *How to Read Marx*, London: Granta.
- Owen, A. (1989) *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England*, London: Virago.
- Lang, A. (1894) *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, London: Longmans, Green.
- Society for Psychical Research (1882) “Objects of the Society,” *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1: 3–6.
- Williams, M. (1894) *Round London: Down East and Up West*, London: Macmillan.

FURTHER READING

- Baldick, C. (1987) *In Frankenstein’s Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing*, Oxford: Clarendon. (Argues that the monster and the monstrous are crucial figures of political significance in the construction of the modern world in the nineteenth century.)
- Buse, P. and Stott, A. (eds) (1999) *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, London: Macmillan. (First collection of essays taking up Derrida’s theoretical ideas on the uses of the specter and spectrality.)
- Hurley, K. (1996) *The Gothic Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Extended treatment of the metamorphic and abject bodies of late-nineteenth-century fiction.)
- Luckhurst, R. (2002) *The Invention of Telepathy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Critical-historical account of the emergence of the idea of telepathy in the late-Victorian period.)
- Smith, A. (2010) *The Ghost Story: 1840–1920*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Cultural history of fictional ghost stories, arguing that the ghost is an important figure of critical analysis.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

GOTHIC HORROR FILM FROM *THE HAUNTED CASTLE* (1896) TO *PSYCHO* (1960)



James Morgart

The establishment of film in the first half of the twentieth century brought with it the rise of the Gothic horror film. It appears that in attempting to achieve what Ellen Moers has described as Gothic literature's ability "to get to the body itself, its glands, muscles, epidermis, and circulatory system" (Moers 1980: 90), early filmmakers repeatedly called upon the Gothic. As a result, the aesthetics of Gothic horror films were inscribed in a process of constant transformation, one brought about by evolutions in culture, cinematic technique and filmmaker ingenuity alike.

Although no overview of the period could ever claim to be exhaustive, a history of the Gothic horror film has nonetheless largely been established. The widely accepted narrative starts with F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), moves to the explosion of Universal monster films in the 1930s, mentions the influx of invasion and monster films during the McCarthy era, points out the rise of Hammer horror and Roger Corman in the late 1950s, and culminates with Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) as the precursors to a "new" sort of horror film, an allegedly "modern horror film." Of course, attempting any such overview requires that one budget one's space in order to focus on the most influential or exceptional examples of the period. While I have no intention of shying away from the films mentioned above, the following chapter will provide an overview that is more inclusive than the accepted critical narrative in order to show the shift in filmic aesthetics, from the earliest creations of Gothic horror for the screen in the form of slapstick trick photography up to the terrifying horror of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

1890–1920: GOTHIC HORROR COMES TO CINEMA

What early cinema produced in the way of Gothic horror was hardly horrific, yet these films assist in tracking the evolution of the application and innovation of Gothic horror aesthetics. Although film critics and historians tend to stress the importance of German Expressionism – particularly F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* – to the establishment of certain visual motifs of the horror films to follow, the most recognizable of Gothic horror aesthetics met celluloid as early as 1896 with Georges

Méliès's Gothic horror-comedy, *The Haunted Castle*. Despite being only three minutes in length, the film establishes precedents for many of the visual motifs that have become synonymous with Gothic horror films ever since, including the visual depictions of witches, ghosts and bats. In fact, the film's large black bat that floats ominously in the air shortly prior to transforming into human form in the opening sequence exhibits a flight pattern and design echoed in later renditions of a vampire bat in films such as Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), George Melford's *Spanish Dracula* (1931) and Browning's *Mark of the Vampire* (1934). Similarly, Méliès's film marks the first time that an assistant to a Gothic antagonist is depicted on screen, and, with this, disability becomes central to that character's identity. The intent for the assistant to be read as disabled (or deformed) is visible through both the actor's movements and his posture, setting a cinematic precedent that would arguably be followed by "evil" assistants stretching from Dwight Frye's performances as Fritz in James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and Renfield in *Dracula* (1931), through to Marty Feldman's performance as Igor in Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein* (1974). Although all of these motifs become important to Gothic horror, the most significant aspect of *The Haunted Castle* is the ability to elicit a reaction from the audience through trick photography.

What cannot be seen in a Gothic horror film becomes just as central to what can be seen, if not more so. In this respect, Méliès's use of the onscreen appearance and disappearance of a set of tricksters or Puck-like antagonists in *The Haunted Castle* was almost immediately taken up as a trope in early film. Edwin S. Porter's *Uncle Josh's Nightmare* (1900), for example, features an elderly Uncle Josh tormented by an appearing and disappearing devilish figure sporting a dark leotard and horns. Uncle Josh would be tormented again in Porter's *Uncle Josh in a Spooky Hotel* (1900), as Uncle Josh and the hotel's concierge are slapped across the face and tapped on the shoulder by a ghost that appears and disappears mysteriously onscreen. In 1907, Spanish filmmaker Segundo de Chomón would also make use of the technique in Gothic horror works such as *The Red Spectre* (1907) and *The Haunted House* (1908). The former features a satanic figure (dressed in a skeleton costume equipped with a cape and horns) who emerges from a floating coffin to dazzle the audience with a series of magic tricks from inside a hellish cavern. The latter film not only makes use of the trick photography that Méliès employs (such as when an entire dinner table disappears from three visitors of the haunted house), but also depicts a haunted exterior that features a rainy setting with flashes of lightning bolts from a cloudy sky and a lone rundown house framed by two leafless trees.

Again, it is important to note that none of these films is particularly horrifying. Even in de Chomón's films, in which the settings provide the potential for horror, the sense of atmospheric horror is often undermined: when lightning strikes the haunted house, for example, the house immediately morphs into a smiling cross-eyed face. The transformation implies that the location in which terror might be situated is no more than a benevolent funhouse. Like Méliès's vampire before it, the house is no more than a naughty trickster – a far cry from the life-threatening Count Orlock in *Nosferatu*.

Even so, there are a few films prior to *Nosferatu* that do contain elements of horror. As early as 1910, J. Searle Dawley's adaptation of *Frankenstein* portrayed a monstrous creature so hideous that Frankenstein's response is to flee in fear. Although

Dawley's adaptation of *Frankenstein* may not gain the appreciation of wider audiences today, the film's visuals are striking in terms of their status as precursors to future films. Shadows are immediately linked to the monster during his birth in a cauldron kept in a shadowy backroom of Frankenstein's laboratory. Once alive, the monster's arm eerily reaches out from behind the backroom's door. "Appalled" at the sight of his creation, Frankenstein seeks refuge in his bedroom, where the creature ominously shows itself for a second time. Rather than enter through the chamber door, the monster appears from behind a curtain and frightens the young scientist to the point of fainting. As Frankenstein's servant enters the room to discover his master on the floor, the creature quietly sinks back into the shadows.

For an even more frightening pre-*Nosferatu* experience, one has to turn to the early film adaptations of Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Although two adaptations were released in 1908 and in 1912, it is Herbert Brenon's 1913 film that is most notable, particularly for the onscreen transformation of Dr Jekyll (played by King Baggot) into Mr Hyde. The transformation is significant in that, rather than using a quick cut from Jekyll to Hyde (as Méliès does in the transformation of the oversized vampire bat into the vampire-nobleman in *The Haunted Castle*), it is effected through a wide shot of Jekyll that slowly dissolves into a wide shot of Hyde. Though the transformation is unsettling, the scene once again comes off more as a means of creating a spectacle out of a film technique than using the film technique to effect a physiological reaction of fright or fear. In fact, Baggot's portrayal of Mr Hyde plays off less as a licentious murderer and more as a deformed imp, similar to the assistant in *The Haunted Castle*. Hyde's most violent crime onscreen is the accosting of a young boy on crutches, before another man intervenes leading to the formation of an angry mob. Although not horrific, the movie is clearly not meant as comic either. The final scene features Jekyll thrusting himself across the room after drinking an "antidote" that accidentally kills him. The closing image is a wide shot of a broken-hearted Janet cradling Jekyll's lifeless body. This, as well as previous adaptations, set the stage for John S. Robertson's highly regarded *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920) starring John Barrymore (Figure 32.1). At over an hour in length, the film is the first full-length feature adaptation, and outmatches its precursors in every way imaginable. Not only does the film feature sexual innuendo and onscreen violence, it also sets new standards concerning how a film might terrify an audience. In fact, the film's first transformation of Barrymore from Jekyll into Hyde is arguably the most influential Gothic horror scene of its time. Rather than opt for the wide shot, as Méliès and others had done, Robertson features a close-up of Jekyll's hand as it dissolves from a normal appendage into a set of elongated tentacles similar to the elongated fingers of a *Nosferatu* or a Freddy Krueger.

The scene in its entirety – including Barrymore's painful writhing about and the close-up of the hand – undoubtedly inspired future transformation scenes as diverse as *The Wolf Man* (Waggoner 1941), *The Track of the Moon Beast* (Ashe 1976) and *An American Werewolf in London* (Landis 1981). The film instantiates a foundation for Gothic horror, featuring visuals, techniques and themes subsequently developed by French, Spanish and American productions, while also allowing German Expressionism to take the Gothic horror film to previously unimagined realms.



Figure 32.1 John Barrymore as Mr Hyde, in John S. Robertson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920)

1920-40: GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM AND THE UNIVERSAL HORROR CYCLE

Definitions of German Expressionism often range from accounts of an underlying political ideology in the themes of films from a select group of German directors in the 1920s, to readings of an extreme visual stylization, or what David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson identify as a “distorted, graphic style of *mise en scène* derived from theatrical Expressionism” (Bordwell and Thompson 1994: 109). This extreme stylization is pervasive throughout the *mise en scène* as actors, costumes and sets “blend” together for a “perfect composition” (Bordwell and Thompson 1994: 109). Geometric shapes and sharp angles dominate the settings and costumes, and are often linked to the characters thematically. For example, in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Weine 1920), Siegfried Kracauer notes that the fair of Dr Caligari is dominated by circles which serve as “a symbol of chaos” (Kracauer 2004: 74). In contrast, straight lines and triangles dominate the *mise en scène* of the police station, the center of order and law that simultaneously casts out and defines chaos. Stark shadows and highly stylized sets exaggerate these themes and evoke an emotional reaction from the audience. Although reactions to *Caligari* were mixed at the time, the style made an immediate impact. As Kracauer explains, “the attempt made in *Caligari* to coordinate settings, players, lighting and action is symptomatic of the

sense of structural organization which, from this film on, manifests itself on the German screen” (Kracauer 2004: 76). With *Caligari*, the formula of a film’s aesthetic success is determined to be based on the ability of every element of the film to be manipulated in thematic harmony.

However, the inclusion of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* into the canon of Gothic horror films is somewhat of a contested issue. Kracauer described the film as “a horror tale in the spirit of E.T.A. Hoffman” (Kracauer 2004: 64). Fred Botting suggests that *Caligari*, along with *Nosferatu* and Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927), “with their grotesque villains and stylized sets, played on the gloomy artificiality of Gothic scenes of terror” (Botting 1996: 166). More concretely, Thomas Elsaesser has read Cesare, the sleepwalker whom Dr Caligari puppeteers to carry out his murders, as Caligari’s doppelgänger, “the embodiment or condensation of rebellious, anti-authoritarian drives which stand in direct contradiction to his own authoritarianism” (Elsaesser 1989: 32). Accounts of doubling in *Caligari*, in tandem with the political theme of oppression that presses on a “phobic pressure point” (King 2010: 4) that is so central to horror, would most certainly qualify the film generically as Gothic horror. In contrast to these claims, some critics have asserted that the only connection between German Expressionism and Gothic horror is the fact that many German Expressionists worked on Universal horror films. For example, Misha Kavka argues that only *Nosferatu* qualifies, despite her observation that the film techniques which categorically define German Expressionism are “closely connected to the Gothic horror” and were “consolidated in the early Universal films” (Kavka 2002: 215).

With *Caligari*’s status as a Gothic horror film called thus into critical question, F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922) becomes the next obvious link that Gothic horror has to German Expressionism. As an unauthorized adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, there is no question as to its Gothic credentials, and its influence on future films is indisputable. In congruence with its Expressionistic lineage, the film uses the entire *mise en scène* to evoke fear and dread in its audience. Most notable is Orlock himself. As a means to evoke fear and revulsion, Orlock conspicuously resembles a rat: a bald pointed head mounted directly on his shoulders, sharp nails, long fingers, eyes bulging from their sockets and long pointed ears. Although there are similarities here to Barrymore’s portrayal of Mr Hyde, there is only a shadow of humanity left in Orlock’s visual appearance. Furthermore, Orlock’s shadow is so iconic it almost seems like an entirely separate character. Although later vampire films would opt for a more humanized Bela Lugosi over Orlock’s bestial appearance, Orlock’s shadow would be replicated and reworked in nearly every *Dracula* adaptation and vampire film to follow – including an extremely innovative use of it in Carl Dreyer’s *Vampyr* (1932) – as well as in horror films as diverse as *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian 1925), *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven 1984) and *Day of the Dead* (Romero 1985). Central, too, to the film is Murnau’s use of the setting. When Orlock’s shadow is not creeping about, a low-hanging archway often frames his body as though he is in a coffin, and at one point he is presented as “clinging to a window grid like a spider in a Bauhaus web” (Skal 2004: 87). This unity of the film’s *mise en scène* has garnered a wide array of interpretations, including the notion of Orlock and the plague that follows as “representing aspects of human malaise, particularly the German soul itself” (Skal 2004: 88), Orlock as a

prime example of “horrific metonymy” (Carroll 1990: 52), and even as a precursor to camp (Skal 2004: 86–87).

Regardless of how one interprets *Nosferatu*, the influence of German Expressionism on the Universal horror cycle cannot be understated. As noted above, while early Gothic horror films lacked much horror, German Expressionism’s innovation in using the entire *mise en scène* to evoke emotions from the audience provided the physiological jolt that American films desperately lacked. As Kavka points out, after *Nosferatu*, shadows became “one of the crucial elements that the Universal series exploits for the visualization of the Gothic” (Kavka 2002: 214). Similarly, settings gained greater significance, as Universal filmmakers synthesized German Expressionism’s penchant for utilizing the entire *mise en scène* with motifs established in early horror films. For example, *Dracula* (1931) established a new rendition of de Chomo’s haunted house with the iconic establishing shot of Dracula’s castle sitting perched on a hill with a lone leafless tree in the foreground, an image which is quickly followed by Dracula’s hand reaching out from his coffin, an echoing back to the hand of Dawley’s Frankenstein’s monster.

The impact of *Nosferatu* on the American Gothic horror film is seen as early as Universal’s production of *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), starring Lon Chaney and directed by Rupert Julian. Although overviews of Gothic horror tend to jump from *Nosferatu* into *Dracula*, the cultural significance of Lon Chaney and the tell-tale signs of Expressionism in *Phantom* are difficult to ignore. The film’s opening scene is an immediate reference to *Nosferatu*, as the Phantom’s shadow appears and disappears on the walls of the labyrinth of torture chambers beneath the Paris opera house that he haunts. Here, the verb “haunt” is an apt one, especially given that, despite not being seen for the first half of the film, the Phantom’s presence looms heavily over the plot. His absence builds anxiety and suspense by providing only shadows of the Phantom on walls, his hand sticking out from beneath a curtain (much like the creature’s arm in Dawley’s *Frankenstein*) and a quick glimpse of his silhouette as the new opera house owners peek into his favorite opera box. Certainly, the build-up is intentional, as the big revelation of the Phantom’s face comes in the form of what might be the first flash-scare in horror film history. Christine doubles the build-up of anticipation as she slowly approaches the Phantom from behind in order to remove his mask. When the mask is finally ripped from the Phantom’s face, his disfigured visage is flashed upon the screen to the horror of contemporary audiences.

The shadows and the labyrinth set are not the only aspects of German Expressionism adopted and reworked throughout the film. In keeping with claims that German Expressionism carried political or ideological metaphors that were underscored by the unity of each film’s *mise en scène*, Julian’s *Phantom* could easily be linked to 1920s American culture. With its beautiful young women and ornate interior (not to mention an ostentatious masquerade), the opera house and its attendants present a veneer that covers over a dark maze of pain, suffering and torture. It is likely of little coincidence that the mask the Phantom dons is a facial prosthesis that disfigured WWI veterans wore in an attempt to experience some semblance of normality. Just as the so-called Roaring Twenties featured a culture of drinking and indulgence during a time of peace, the Parisians in Julian’s *Phantom* indulged in a grandiose masquerade. Moreover, beneath that masquerade lies a past filled with

pain and torture, for haunting the indulgent Roaring Twenties was an unforgettable world war that resulted in inconceivable torment. Despite the lack of attention that the film has received in critical overviews of the Gothic horror film, it is apparent that Julian's *Phantom of the Opera* is the first horror film to synthesize the techniques of early horror cinema with those of German Expressionism.

In addition to these influences of German Expressionism on the Universal cycle's new formulation of Gothic horror, the most obvious impact was the influx of German filmmakers and actors who defected from Germany to the United States during the 1920s through to the 1940s. Karl Freund, cinematographer for *The Golem* (Wegener and Galeen 1915), for example, immigrated to the United States in 1929, where he eventually served as cinematographer on *Dracula* (1931) and *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (Florey 1932) and later as a director on *The Mummy* (1932) and *Mad Love* (1935). Similarly, prior to gaining fame among American audiences for performances in *The Maltese Falcon* (Huston 1941) and *Casablanca* (Curtiz 1942), Peter Lorre first starred in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) before defecting to the United States to feature eventually in Freund's *Mad Love*. In fact, Karl Freund and Peter Lorre, two filmmakers trained by German Expressionists while in Germany, serve as important links between the Gothic horror films of the 1920s and those of the immediate postwar era.

1940–1960: A PROLIFERATION OF GOTHIC HORROR

Critics often treat the end of the Universal horror cycle as the death of a renaissance period for horror films, a critical assumption which serves to render the immediate postwar era as a veritable wasteland for horror films. Contrary to the claim that the Universal horror film “dissipated by formulaic repetition” (Bordwell and Thompson 1994: 256), films like *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (Kenton 1942), *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (Neill 1943) and *House of Dracula* (Kenton 1945) were box-office successes, indicating that American audiences' thirst for horror far from disappeared in the 1940s. Unfortunately, the success of the Universal cycle has resulted in a stereotypical conceptualization of Gothic horror films, one that tends to limit it to preoccupations with various forms of monstrosity. Rather than considering developments outside of the more obviously visceral forms of horror, critics often tend to cover a brief overview of Gothic horror-science-fiction films in the guise of invasion films that implement the uncanny as a means of exploiting the paranoia of an invisible threat raised by McCarthyism, and apocalypse and monster films that exploit the Cold War anxieties of “the bomb” and the threat of nuclear fallout. The most notable of these films is undoubtedly *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Kaufman 1956), which has received considerable attention from critics specializing in areas as diverse as the Gothic, science fiction and posthumanism. While these films are significant, reducing postwar Gothic horror films to invasion and monster films is somewhat of a distortion. Instead, the fall of the Universal horror cycle is marked not only by the proliferation of science fiction and the early work of Roger Corman and Hammer horror, but also by the flowering of three Gothic horror filmmakers with very different styles: Val Lewton, Edgar G. Ulmer and Alfred Hitchcock.

Although Val Lewton and Edgar G. Ulmer are not generally paired together, these two filmmakers were responsible for some of the most interesting low-budget horror

films to come out of postwar cinema. Lewton initially served as an assistant to David O. Selznick, while Ulmer claimed to have worked as a set designer for Fritz Lang on *Metropolis* and *M*; the influence of the masters on their protégés is apparent. In Lewton's case, one would think that Selznick's lavish, big-budget productions like *King Kong* (1933) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939) have nothing in common with Lewton's body of low-budget horror films, *Cat People* (1942), *The Leopard Man* (1943) and *The Body Snatcher* (1945). In actuality, the assumption would be correct as, outside of some thematic similarities between Selznick's *Rebecca* (Hitchcock 1940) and the Gothic horror within Lewton's corpus, the two producers created very different films. The similarity lies in both producers' compulsion to micromanage their films from start to finish. In choosing to work for RKO in the early 1940s, Lewton made the decision to make low-budget films so that he could maintain a strict control over every aspect of the production, from the script to the editing of the final cut. What Lewton brought to Gothic horror was a new strain and future alternative template for Gothic horror filmmakers. While Universal and later science fiction films sought to build on the spectacle of the monster, Lewton's films are noted for what is not visible on screen. This is most easily demonstrated by the famous scene in Jacques Tourneur's *Cat People*, in which Alice (played by Jane Randolph) is tormented by a giant panther while in an indoor swimming pool. Like the Phantom and Orlock before her, only the panther's shadow is seen gliding ominously across the wall.

Just like Lang, Ulmer's films are noted for their heavily stylized sets and for a fascination with noir and noir-like plots, as demonstrated by films such as *The Black Cat* (1934), *Detour* (1945), *The Man from Planet X* (1951) and *Daughter of Dr Jekyll* (1957). What makes Ulmer's work intriguing is the inclusion and innovation of several Gothic horror tropes. Even the notionally science-fiction film, *The Man from Planet X*, opens with a foggy landscape, the howling of wolves in the distance, an isolated mansion on a hill and villagers relaying descriptions of a not-quite-human monster. Over the span of Ulmer's career, his films increasingly feature sexual themes and connotations. In *The Man From Planet X*, journalist John Lawrence initially visits Dr Elliot to report on the story of a rogue planet, yet upon his arrival he spends an inordinate amount of time pursuing the doctor's daughter, perhaps as aggressively as Walter Neff pursues Phyllis Dietrichson during their first encounter in *Double Indemnity* (Wilder 1944). With the release of the Kinsey Reports on male and female sexuality in 1948 and 1953, respectively, sexuality is undoubtedly in the air, and serves as one explanation for its prevalence in both noir and horror films. Although early films like adaptations of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Phantom of the Opera* and *King Kong* included sexuality as a theme, filmmakers such as Ulmer would more blatantly emphasize it as the Hollywood production code began to disintegrate. However, few filmmakers would push the boundaries quite as far as Alfred Hitchcock, a British director who was seemingly "overjoyed by the possibilities of sexual titillation of his audience" (Punter 1996: 112) as he boldly forced them into the perspective of a killer slashing away at his beautiful female victim in a shower.

Hitchcock's associations with horror are often said to lie in his "invention" of the slasher genre with the production of *Psycho* (1960). Hitchcock's work in Gothic horror, however, is rooted far deeper than the psyche of Norman Bates. Aside from his direct connection to German Expressionism (he was profoundly influenced by

his experience as an assistant to F.W. Murnau in Berlin), his first American film, *Rebecca*, is considered by critics to be exemplary of the Female Gothic filmic tradition (Hanson 2007: 40–47). Indeed, all of the necessary components of the Gothic are present in *Rebecca*. The film opens with the camera pushing through a foggy Gothic landscape of leafless trees and an imperious black iron gate of a Gothic mansion. In her attempt to maintain the mansion, the nameless protagonist (played by Joan Fontaine) is haunted by the memory of her husband's dead wife, Rebecca. The categorization of the film as horror, however, is a complicated gesture. Although Rebecca's former confidante, Mrs Danvers, is an undeniably chilling character, the film seems to lack a conspicuous scene of horror. In fact, in terms of violence and fear, the film is outdone by some of Hitchcock's earlier works: *The Lodger* (1927), for example, features a rather disturbing scene of a mob attacking a defenseless and falsely accused man. The film also notably includes a scene introducing the lodger in silhouette at the front door, which is imitated by *The Exorcist* (Friedkin 1973) nearly fifty years later. In both films, the scene is to underscore the arrival of a shadowy, enigmatic (and troubled) stranger late in the evening. Likewise, Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929) serves as a precursor to another knife-wielding scene in Hitchcock's corpus, as the film's protagonist, Alice White (played by Anny Ondra), brandishes a knife shortly before stabbing her would-be rapist in self-defense. Interestingly enough, though, all of these films depict an entrapped female who is constantly in danger of being either physically violated or considerably constrained by the forces surrounding her. Hitchcock's themes very nearly reach a synthesis with *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), a Gothic film featuring several allusions to *Dracula* and a maddening number of references to doubles intensified by the protagonist and antagonist both being named Charlie. What Hitchcock accomplishes in *Psycho*, however, is unsurpassed by his previous work.

The horror of *Psycho* has long since been made apparent by the iconic shower scene, to the extent that the numerous innovations to the Gothic horror film present within Hitchcock's film tend to get lost. Rather than locate the horror in a castle or a mansion, Hitchcock situates it in the Bates house, a notoriously creepy Victorian dwelling perched on a hill and accompanied by a leafless tree. Shadows, just like the veneers that hide them, are never quite what they appear to be, as the shadow of Mrs Bates peering from one of the house's windows is revealed to be a corpse, and later, in Marion Crane's death scene, as Norman in his mother's dress. The revelation of Norman's deepest secret occurring in the barren fruit cellar of the Bates residence not only recalls the Phantom's secret labyrinth dwelling in *The Phantom of the Opera*, but also establishes a precedent for future horror films by locating horror in the basement of the family home, a trope replicated in countless films such as *Don't Look in the Basement* (Brownrigg 1973), *The Stepfather* (Ruben 1987) and *The Girl Next Door* (Wilson 2007). Hitchcock also sets a precedent with his use of a false protagonist, as Marion Crane is followed exclusively for the first fifteen minutes of the film until Norman intervenes. This is a technique that has been most notably replicated by Wes Craven in *The Last House on the Left* (1972), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and *Scream* (1996). If any doubt remains as to its horrific credentials, Hitchcock leaves the audience with a haunting image of a close-up of the face of Mrs Bates's corpse dissolving over Norman's face to underscore both the film's lineal relation to the madness of Dr Jekyll and its theme of veneers and the horror of



Figure 32.2 Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960)

what lies beneath (Figure 32.2). That is to say, unlike in the early adaptations of *Dr Jekyll* and the werewolf films to follow, the dissolve in *Psycho* is never actually completed. For Hitchcock, the monstrous Other is not something that man transforms into, but something that is always present, deep within.

As one would suspect, any overview of the beginnings of the Gothic horror film is never complete. Just as the Gothic exhibits the tendency of a refusal to be contained, my own overview of Gothic horror fails to contain the expansive field of horror films of the first part of the twentieth century. To begin with, any newcomer to the field would be well-advised to acquaint themselves with James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and his masterpiece *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), the latter arguably the best film of the Universal cycle, as well to make themselves familiar with as much of Hitchcock's and Lewton's work as they possibly can. Likewise, it might be worth investigating the work of lesser-known directors such as Victor Halperin, whose own mini-horror cycle of *White Zombie* (1932), *Supernatural* (1933), *Revolt of the Zombies* (1936), *Torture Ship* (1937) and *Buried Alive* (1939) has largely been critically overlooked. Other seminal films in the period include Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), Charles Laughton's *Night of the Hunter* (1955), Mervyn LeRoy's *The Bad Seed* (1956) and Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960). In acquainting oneself with this material, one might be better placed to answer the question of whether *Metropolis* is horrific "enough" to qualify as a horror film, and whether *Freaks*, *Night of the Hunter*, *The Bad Seed* and *Peeping Tom* have any relation to the Gothic outside of their ability to horrify. Whatever direction one takes, the history of the Gothic horror film will always provide fertile ground for study, as most new films in the genre continue to be haunted by its influence.

REFERENCES

- Bordwell, D. and Thompson, K. (1994) *Film History: An Introduction*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Botting, F. (1996) *Gothic*, London: Routledge.
- Carroll, N. (1990) *The Philosophy of Horror; Or, Paradoxes of the Heart*, New York: Routledge.
- Elsaesser, T. (1989) "Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema," in J. Donald (ed.) *Fantasy and the Cinema*, London: British Film Institute, 23–38.
- Hanson, H. (2007) *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film*, London: I.B. Tauris.
- Kavka, M. (2002) "The Gothic on Screen," in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 209–28.
- King, S. (2010) *Danse Macabre*, 1981, New York: Gallery Books.
- Kracauer, S. (2004) *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Moers, E. (1980) *Literary Women*, London: Women's Press.
- Punter, D. (1996) *The Literature of Terror, Volume 2: The Modern Gothic*, London: Longman.
- Skal, D.J. (2001) *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, New York: Faber and Faber.

FURTHER READING

- Crow, C.L. (2009) *American Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press. (An overview of American Gothic works that discusses motifs present from the earliest American Gothic writers.)
- Dixon, W.W. (2010) *A History of Horror*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. (A discussion of the historical origins of horror films ranging from the early silent era to modern horror.)
- Grant, B.K. (ed.) (1996) *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, Austin: University of Texas Press. (A compilation of influential scholarly essays on horror films and gender.)
- Gelder, K. (ed.) (2000) *The Horror Reader*, London: Routledge. (A collection of cultural studies essays on horror films, literature, and fanzines.)
- Haslem, W. (2009) *A Charade of Innocence and Vice: Hollywood Gothic Films of the 1940s*, Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing. (A study of 1940s Gothic films from Hitchcock to Tourneur that traces their roots back to Perrault's *Bluebeard*.)
- Huckvale, D. (2010) *Touchstones of Gothic Horror: A Film Genealogy of Eleven Motifs and Images*, New York: McFarland. (As its title suggests, a genealogical study that traces motifs in horror cinema back to Gothic architecture and early Gothic literature.)
- Modleski, T. (2005) *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, New York: Routledge. (Modleski views Hitchcock through a feminist lens to question previous assertions of Hitchcock's misogyny.)
- Phillips, K.R. (2005) *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture*, London: Praeger. (An in-depth cultural study of horror films and their relation to anxieties prevalent in American culture.)
- Pirie, D. (2008) *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema*, London: I.B. Tauris. (A landmark work in Gothic cinema studies, Pirie's study uses the terror of early Gothic literature as the basis for his understanding of Gothic cinema.)

- Punter, D. and Byron G. (2004) *The Gothic*, Malden, MA: Blackwell. (A seminal overview of Gothic origins, motifs and debates.)
- Skal, D.J. (1998) *Screams of Reason: Mad Science and Modern Culture*, New York: Norton. (A comprehensive cultural study of postwar science fiction films.)
- Wood, R. (1966) *Hitchcock's Films*, New York: Barnes and Tantivy. (A seminal work on Hitchcock's corpus.)
- Worland, R. (2007) *The Horror Film: An Introduction*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. (A historical overview of horror cinema.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

GOTHIC HORROR FILM, 1960–PRESENT



Xavier Aldana Reyes

Gothic horror is interstitial. On the one hand, it emphasizes the affective qualities of the horror genre. On the other, it uses recognizable Gothic settings and conveys disturbing moods that aim to create the unease or destabilization often ascribed to the reading experience of the Gothic novel. It is therefore important that Gothic horror is not confused with Gothic cinema. Tim Burton's *oeuvre*, for example, relies on a specific type of dark imagery that aligns itself more with fantasy and fairy tales (Page 2007: 7–8) than with horror. Similarly, the supernatural romance of a number of films that have derived from the paradigm-shifting *Twilight* (Hardwicke 2008) should be neatly separated from the more visceral forms of horror covered in this chapter. Gothic horror is hard to define precisely because it is neither a genre, in the strict sense in which horror is a genre, nor a distinct subgenre. Instead, Gothic horror's distinctiveness lies in its reliance on specific Gothic atmospheres, settings, music, tropes or figures, yet *always* with the intention of scaring, disturbing or “grossing out.”

A complete account of the many twists and turns of Gothic horror since 1960 would necessarily include many works of such continental directors as Dario Argento, Mario Bava, Lucio Fulci, Jess Franco and Amando de Ossorio. It would also have to embrace the uncanny desert landscapes of *Dust Devil* (Stanley 1992), the cataleptic turmoil of the transnational *Repulsion* (Polanski 1965) or the psychosexual doppelgängers of *Possession* (Zulawski 1981). In the interest of economy, however, I focus on key trends and films from the United Kingdom and America. Although amenable to readings that may foreground their national specificities, the Gothic horrors produced by these countries often rely on a shared literary Anglo-American set of conventions that set them apart from other horror traditions. Their productions have also enjoyed the largest budgets and, in some cases, have become mainstream hits worldwide. Of all the possible thematic concerns, some Gothic motifs have necessarily proved more influential than others. For example, although the pagan Gothic of *The Blood on Satan's Claw* (Haggard 1971) or *The Wicker Man* (Hardy 1973) is highly original and popular, its filmic progeny has been limited. Conversely, monsters, apparitions, haunted houses or serial killers have populated the screen in high numbers since the 1960s, often to the point of saturation. These

films are therefore given priority in this chapter, even if this means omitting horror landmarks such as *Rosemary's Baby* (Polanski 1968), *The Omen* (Donner 1976), *Carnival of Souls* (Harvey 1962) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch 1986), influential subgenres such as possession or rape-revenge films, or important cycles such as Roger Corman's Poe adaptations.

In order to survey the area of Gothic horror, I identify at least three elements that typify its existence over the past five decades: the increasing corporealization of the ghost as well as its digital mediation, a strong fascination with monsters and their sexuality, and a marked move toward embodiment which has led to an opening up of the body and its transformation as the ultimate site of Gothic inscription.

HAUNTINGS, DARK HOUSES AND SPECTERS

Ghosts negotiate the collapse of boundaries between shared notions of reality and the occult possibilities of the beyond. They are thus productive figures through which to study altered states of mind, or the possibility of survival after death. The early 1960s saw the release of two highly accomplished adaptations of well-known Gothic texts, both of which used the haunted house motif to explore troubled psychologies or arrested development. Decay, as well as the supernatural forces that inhabit the vast spaces of castles or mansions, signals the descent into madness or losing of touch with reality of their main characters. The first film, *The Haunting* (Wise 1963), approaches Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) with the novel's characteristic subtlety and restraint, and powerfully showcases the links between social awkwardness and repression. Here, the aging and discontented Eleanor (Julie Harris) drives to Hill House in search of freedom from her family and past, particularly the turbulent relationship with her bed-ridden mother. Eleanor's psychic qualities are channeled by the mansion in a series of events that foreground her indecisive, passive nature and her sexual confusion. The second film, *The Innocents* (Clayton 1961), released two years earlier, adapts Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and explores similar territory. Its lead, the governess Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr), finds herself trapped between the disturbing flirtatious behavior of one of the children in her tutelage and the possibility of the ghost of Peter Quint, a licentious valet who may have performed indiscreet sexual acts in public. The film's treatment of reality and/or hallucination ensures that Miss Giddens's potentially conflicted psyche is reflected in an inconclusive denouement.

The old dark house subgenre, also popular at the time, was less interested in metaphysics or psychology than films about hauntings, but it also exploited for their fear-inducing capacities the Gothic specificities of capacious, gloomy manor houses or labyrinthine mansions with as many trapdoors and secret passages as the castles of Udolpho or Otranto. The most habitual premise normally involves the reading of a will, an occasion at which most members of a family are present. Ghosts and other supernatural phenomena are normally explained away, in true Radcliffean fashion, through the introduction of manipulative killers or lunatics escaped from nearby asylums. Most of the old dark house features that appeared in the 1960s were hybrid comedies: *What a Carve-up* (Jackson 1961), *The Horror of It All* (Fisher 1964), *The Ghost and Mr Chicken* (Rafkin 1966) or the William Castle remake of *The Old Dark House* (1963) all contain horror elements, but Pete Walker's later *House of the*

Long Shadows (1983) exploited these to greater effect. Its main character, a writer who thoroughly decries Gothic romances and makes a bet that he can write something as “over the top” as Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in 24 hours, travels to a Welsh estate that has been empty for 40 years in pursuit of the most conducive and inspirational atmosphere. Complete with a rightful heir who has been kept locked away for decades, *House of the Long Shadows* is one of the best homages to Gothic horror. Its cast boasts genre stars Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, Christopher Lee and Sheila Keith, and it includes a long list of clichés (from rotting corpses to stormy nights and poisoning) and archetypal characters (from tyrannical patriarchs who mourn the death of the old order to damsels in distress).

Real historical events have also, at times, been used as the backdrop for elaborate or apocryphal Gothic reimagings. The often ignored *Gothic* (Russell 1986), for instance, blended the haunted house trope with a famous episode of literary history in its fantastic recreation of the events of the summer of 1816, events which led to the writing of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) and John Polidori’s “The Vampyre” (1819). Its opening, highly reminiscent of the *Bride of Frankenstein* (Whale 1935), shows Percy (Julian Sands) and Mary Shelley (Natasha Richardson) joining Lord Byron (Gabriel Byrne) for a few days of spooky entertainment and camaraderie at the picturesque Villa Diodati in Switzerland. Although bereft of actual ghosts, the film wears its Gothic credentials on its sleeve: Fuseli’s painting “The Nightmare” (1781) is recreated as a bad dream, and its characters cite canonical novels like *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *The Monk* (1796). Not content with this level of intertextuality, *Gothic* also plays out excerpts from *Fantasmagoriana* (1818), a collection of ghost stories meant, as this filmic Byron puts it, to “conjure up [their] deepest, darkest fear[s].” *The Amityville Horror* (Rosenberg 1979) is a similar and highly referential hybrid film. The true crime story of Ronald DeFeo, Jr, who murdered his whole family, is combined with a series of visitations that torment the Lutz family upon arrival at his house. Some of the most striking paranormal moments include an indeterminate black substance bubbling up from the toilet, blood trailing down the walls and what appears to be a flying pig with red eyes. The film’s lack of closure, as well as the absence of an actual anthropomorphic ghost, makes *The Amityville Horror* one of the most open-ended haunted house narratives post-1960. Important though they have been to the construction of the aesthetic of Gothic horror, derelict or uninhabited houses are not the only buildings susceptible to hauntings. The formidable Overlook Hotel in Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980) shows that Gothic settings can successfully escape the confines of the suburban. This film relishes panoramic pans that explore the uncanny nature of the building and its surroundings, but also emphasizes the other protagonists of the story: the ghosts themselves. In fact, there is often little distinction made between the portrayal of ghosts – potential hallucinations – and the visions of the relapsing alcoholic father, Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson). Often, as in the bar scene, the film only tacitly points out the actual physical absence of these apparitions by showing Jack talking to an empty room. Such scenes evince another change in spectral narratives in the second half of the twentieth century: the development of more physical, almost tangible, ghostly manifestations. William Castle’s *13 Ghosts* (1960), for instance, features ethereal earthbound spirits, but makes a point of giving them a more “real” purchase on reality by suggesting that they can be captured and collected. The

Hollywood blockbuster *The Sixth Sense* (Shyamalan 1999) would even go so far as to explore the narrative possibilities of having the ghostly nature of its main character hidden to both intradiegetic characters and viewers alike. As in *The Others* (Amenábar 2001), this can only be achieved if the ghost is made virtually unintelligible as such, and thus figured as a very real and human presence. In other cases, such as that of the recently rebooted Hammer studios remake of *The Woman in Black* (Watkins 2012), the effect may also be achieved by having a character begin the film as human, but later turn into a ghost. Here the viewer often realizes the change in planes of reality at about the same time that the specter does. If such stylistic decisions are, to a certain extent, dictated by the script, they also point to the move toward corporeality that I trace elsewhere in this chapter, a move that has also been registered in the appearance of what we might term “digital ghosts.”

Although *The Stone Tape* (Sasdy 1972) and *Poltergeist* (Hooper 1982) already saw their lead supernatural presences threatening the living through tapes or television sets, contemporary ghosts have increasingly materialized through digital technology. This has constituted both a gothicization of new media and the use of their mediatic intricacies to tell ghost stories innovatively. Films such as *FearDotCom* (Malone 2002), *White Noise* (Sax 2005) and *Pulse* (Sonzero 2006) feature spectral presences filtering through radio waves or Internet websites and having a direct impact on the physical reality of the living. These mediated hauntings have undoubtedly been influenced by 1999’s surprise J-horror hit, *Ringu* (Nakata 1998), as well as its American remake *The Ring* (Verbinski 2002), in which the curse of a murdered young girl is literally and figurally “transmitted” through the watching of a specific unmarked video tape. Where at all possible, the only ways to palliate the wrath of the angry presences in these films are either to make their stories go viral, or to let the apparitions express their pent-up rage and frustration. As such, they appropriately adapt ghosts to the twenty-first century, and highlight the potential dangers that new communication technologies may have on human relationships. As I have mentioned, ghost stories have also used new digital technologies for stylistic purposes. The handheld camera style and found footage premise that gave fame to the effective American woods horror *The Blair Witch Project* (Myrick and Sánchez 1999) is perceptible in the recent success of the *Paranormal Activity* created by Oren Peli (2007–present) series. Here, the traditional haunted house story is subverted, showing the haunting to be an affair driven by the body rather than by a specific location; it has sparked a spate of supernatural and paranormal horrors that have culminated in the mockumentary possession film *The Devil Inside* (Bell 2012).

GOTHIC MONSTERS

It is fair to say that horror film after 1960 has tried to resurrect every single Gothic monster that has ever existed: ghouls and monsters from both the Anglo-American and European traditions. But while gorgons or phantoms of the opera have been invoked sparsely, vampires, Frankenstein’s monsters, witches, werewolves and zombies are recurring figures in modern and contemporary horror. Of these, *Frankenstein* might be credited for having revived an interest in Gothic horror that is unparalleled since the days of the Universal monster cycle. Hammer’s *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Fisher 1957) and *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (Fisher 1958)

revisited their respective icons and added copious servings of Technicolor blood (an eye being shot) and viscera (organs in formaldehyde). But if these films' landmark status derives in some measure from their titillating nature, they also brought to filmic Gothic a strong concern with embodiment and death. *Revenge* toyed with metaphysical quandaries by proposing that the soul could be transported from one body to another, and *The Evil of Frankenstein* (Francis 1964) saw the baron (Peter Cushing) boldly stating that the origin of life is a simple case of "biophysical chemistry," or "chemical action and reaction controlled by the external impulses." But it was perhaps *Frankenstein Created Woman* (Fisher 1967) that was most wildly imaginative in this respect. In it, a hanged man's brain is transplanted onto the body of his female lover. The monster then takes revenge on those who had abused them in the past, in an improbable but beguiling experiment on the persistence of brain memory.

Hammer aside, Frankenstein horror films from the 1960s onward have tended to adopt polar positions: they have either attempted to be as faithful to the original as possible, or they have deliberately deviated from Shelley's novel for other purposes. In the first category, *Terror of Frankenstein* (Floyd 1977) is particularly noteworthy, although it did not capture the popular imagination to any great extent. *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Branagh 1994) was received in a similarly lukewarm fashion, and its tragic temperamental monster, played by Robert De Niro, originally garnered mixed reviews. In fact, it could be argued that the Frankensteinian monster has been kept most vibrantly alive through reinterpretations of the myth that have come from considerably varied cinematic quarters, and in films which cannot easily be classified as horror. Among others, the original *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Sharman 1975) developed the sexually progressive Dr Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry); the spoof-homage *Young Frankenstein* (Brooks 1974) managed to convert the story into a successful comedy following the life of the doctor's ashamed grandson; the explicit art-horror of *Flesh for Frankenstein* (Morrissey and Margheriti 1973) offered the controversial possibility of a homosexual monster; *Frankenhooker* (Henenlotter 1990) saw the myth turn to a critique of pimping via exploitation cinema; and *The Bride* (Roddam 1985) produced a feminist reworking that is ripe for critical consideration. More recently, *The Frankenstein Syndrome* (Tretta 2010) has tried to bring the monster into the present by locating Frankenstein's godlike ambition to create life within the ethical conundrums of unregulated stem-cell research. This film shows that the Frankensteinian monster might still be able to escape its literary remit in critically productive ways from within the horror genre.

Vampires, for their part, have proven extremely successful and have managed to move well beyond their most famous representative, Stoker's Count Dracula. This is partly due to the fact that vampiric characteristics can be worked into metaphors for a number of human obsessions or anxieties. Thus, vampirism has simultaneously stood in for drug-abuse (Ferrara's *The Addiction*, 1995), or as a suggestive metaphor for the tribulations of adolescence (Romero's *Martin*, 1976), or, in the case of *The Hunger* (Scott 1983), as a powerful portrayal of the fear of aging. Another aspect that makes vampires particularly liberating Gothic figures in cinematic terms is their ubiquity. Mummies are still necessarily grounded within a potentially costly or narrative-limiting Egyptological background, but vampires can exist anywhere. In fact, key films in the genre have shown the need for such adaptability. The 1970s

began freeing these creatures from their original Transylvanian motherland as well as from the period settings that had until then become the norm. *Count Yorga, Vampire* (Kelljan 1970) and *Salem's Lot* (Hooper 1979) transplanted the myth to America, while Hammer's own *Dracula A.D. 1972* (Gibson 1972) and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (Gibson 1973) brought the Count back to life in contemporary England. These vampires still wear capes, are of foreign extraction, and are pitted against the newer generations; in a sense, then, they still remain social outcasts and outsiders. This is an image that has found a continuation in films such as *Nadja* (Almeryda 1994) or the HBO series *True Blood* (Ball 2008–present), with the latter having gone so far as to imagine a society in which vampiric alterity may be successfully integrated into the status quo.

I have intimated above that vampires have developed independently of the literary model. In fact, Hammer's own *Dracula* became increasingly marginal and almost accessory throughout the 1960s – witness the mute Count in *Prince of Darkness* (Fisher 1967) – and other vampires soon appeared in *The Brides of Dracula* (Fisher 1960) or *The Kiss of the Vampire* (Sharp 1963). By the early 1970s, the studios had vouched for a highly eroticized and almost predominantly female vampire. Although *Dracula's Daughter* (Hillyer 1936) already envisions the notion of the “monster queer” (Benshoff 1997) in the 1930s, it is perhaps *The Vampire Lovers* (Baker 1970) that most openly exploited the vampire's erotic potential. A loose adaptation of Sheridan Le Fanu's “Carmilla” (1872), the film traces the adventures of a vampire (Ingrid Pitt) and her sexual encounters with the women in the von Spielfdorf household. Of particular interest is Carmilla's emotional attachment to the general's daughter, Laura (Pippa Steel), a passionate attachment which is fodder for full-frontal nudity and homoeroticism.



Figure 33.1 Vampire Erotics: Ingrid Pitt as Carmilla in the explicit *The Vampire Lovers* (1970)

Other interesting productions, such as *Lust for a Vampire* (Sangster 1971), *Twins of Evil* (Hough 1971) or the non-Hammer Anglo-Spanish co-production *Vampyres* (Aguirre 1974), further developed this trend, upping the amount of on-screen nudity and sex. John Badham's dandy Count in *Dracula* (1979) culminated in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Coppola 1992), a film which, despite its claim to faithfulness, fabricated an entire romantic subplot between the Count and Mina that would resonate with the sexy protagonists of *Interview with the Vampire* (Jordan 1994). These new supernatural heroes, both appealing and deeply flawed, have seen their most financially viable progeny in teenage romances.

Monsters in the latter half of the twentieth century have also been ineluctably tied to the feminist movement and to changes in attitudes toward the screen presence and social role of women. If telekinesis has been specifically linked to young girls in two Brian De Palma productions, *Carrie* (1976) and *The Fury* (1978), witchcraft has proven an effective backdrop for the interplay between the desires and anxieties of aging women. *Night of the Eagle* (Hayers 1962) sees middle-aged Tansy (Janet Blair) making recourse to various spells and talismans in order to protect her husband from the powers of a colleague's jealous wife. This form of agency and empowerment is repeated in *The Witches* (Frankel 1966), where Stephanie Bax (Kay Walsh) goes as far as to assert that witchcraft is a "sex thing" that older women go in for because "they relish the idea of a secret power, especially when their normal powers are failing." The tyrant titular character in *Witchfinder General* (Reeves 1968), famously played by Vincent Price, would soon thereafter make its way through seventeenth-century England, punishing women who threaten or refuse male authority. *Dr Jekyll's* Mr Hyde, another Gothic monster which aside from *Mary Reilly* (Frears 1996) and *Fight Club* (Fincher 1999) has been critically overlooked in recent years, was put to a similar gender-vindictive use in *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (Baker 1971). The film explores social fears about sexually-active women through sister Hyde (Martine Beswick), Jekyll's female Other, as well as the restrictive movement and limitations of young women through Susan (Susan Broderick).

Gothic monsters, then, are also utilized in film to negotiate problems related to adolescence and the coming of age. The obvious connection between sexual awakening and the shape-shifting qualities of lycanthropy were cemented by Hammer in *The Curse of the Werewolf* (Fisher 1961), and by the 1980s, the werewolf had become most typically a teenager. *An American Werewolf in London* (Landis 1981) and *The Company of Wolves* (Jordan 1984) also show a fascination with the transformations themselves, scenes often granted extended on-screen time and depicted as painful moments of bodily rebellion that could be read as grotesque renditions of growing pains. These elaborate metamorphoses are not just a testament to advances in special effects; they also construct werewolves as monsters which project anxieties surrounding identity, lack of self-control or corporeal changes. *Ginger Snaps* (Fawcett 2000), where Ginger's (Katharine Isabelle) entry into lycanthropy is paired with her first menstruation, captures the metaphorical possibilities of the werewolf brilliantly. The film follows Ginger's mood-swings as she morphs into a sexually-active teenager, later infecting a boy through unprotected sex. Ginger's body becomes a material prison that she cannot escape, and point to what I am suggesting is contemporary Gothic horror's single-most important trait: the establishment of embodiment as the prime site of fear and uncertainty.

The excesses and weaknesses of corporeality have also been the subject matter of zombie films. *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero 1968) created a new creature diametrically opposed to the voodoo victims of Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (1932) or *Revolt of the Zombies* (1936). With *Night*, zombies became rotting corpses with a never-ending hunger for brains, a characteristic which made them particularly appealing to splatter directors. Corporeal limits are transgressed in the various blood and limb showers of *Braindead* (Jackson 1992); in *Re-Animator* (Gordon 1985), based on H.P. Lovecraft's short story, severed heads talk by themselves in autopsy rooms; and in *Shaun of the Dead* (Wright 2004), splatter shares the spotlight with black humor. Contemporary zombies, since the successes of *28 Days Later* (Boyle 2002) or *I Am Legend* (Lawrence 2007), are also considerably faster than their lumbering forebears, and increasingly their zombified condition is construed as the result of infection.

Although viral monstrosity is not an exclusive province of zombiehood – as Stacey Abbott (2007: 197–214) has noted, vampires have recently embarked on scientific searches for cures in *Blade* (Norrington 1998), *Underworld* (Wiseman) and *Daybreakers* (Spierig 2009) – the trope has suitably enhanced the zombie's pandemic qualities. At the same time, zombies, traditionally reserved for the B-movie/cult aficionado, have become more mainstream, a tendency witnessed in the high-budget production of *Zombieland* (Fleischer 2009). And if the rom-zom-com *Warm Bodies* (Levine 2013) is indicative of future trends, the boundaries between zombies and humans, once questioned in different registers by *Return of the Living Dead* (O'Bannon 1985) and *Day of the Dead* (Romero 1985), promise to be further complicated through the introduction of romantic plots similar to those that currently preoccupy vampires.

NEW CORPOREALITIES

Gothic horror since the 1960s has also given birth to a number of idiosyncratic monsters. The “auteur” serial killer, especially after the Gothic trappings of *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960), has gone on to become one of the most successful and productive cinematic horror figures. The various innovations of Hitchcock's film have already been covered in chapter 32 in this collection, but of these, the early disappearance of the heroine and the focus on Norman Bates's psychology are surely foundational. Shortly thereafter, Hammer released a stream of formulaic, generally black-and-white suspense thrillers with a twist which included, among other titles, *Scream of Fear* (Holt 1961), Freddie Francis's *Paranoiac* (1963) and *Nightmare* (1964), and *The Nanny* (Holt 1965). This last film starred Bette Davies in her most villainous performance since *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Aldrich 1962), and could be best described as a horror thriller. The asphyxiating quality of the relationship between the alleged sister-murdering Joey (William Dix) and his potentially scheming nanny makes the most of the uncertain status of its characters and their confused psychologies.

Lurking in *Psycho*, too, was the threat of voyeurism, a perversion which found its other strongest manifestation that very same year in the much more controversial *Peeping Tom* (Powell 1960). This film was the first self-reflexive slasher movie, and its plot, which records the crimes of Max (Karlheinz Böhm) as he attempts to record

the face of death by killing women with a bayonet-tripod, proved too extreme for audiences and critics. It has since gained critical acclaim and is now sometimes seen as a precursor to the less subtle “death films” that developed after *Snuff* (Findlay *et al.*, 1976) and its final “real” murder. *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (McNaughton 1986) followed *Peeping Tom*’s steps almost three decades later. A key sequence, in which the camera pulls out to reveal that the violence perpetrated on a family has been taped and is being watched by Henry (Michael Rooker) for titillating purposes, provides a strong critique of the enjoyment of excess that echoes with the Gothic genre and its intrinsic self-awareness. But the serial killer was perhaps finally assimilated into the Gothic pantheon in the early 1990s, when *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme 1991) won five Academy Awards and instantly became one of the most critically acclaimed horror films of all time. The canonization of its main character, Doctor Hannibal Lecter, as a Gothic monster along the lines of Dracula or Baron Frankenstein was, to a certain extent, predictable, since he, like many of the villains in the fiction of Ann Radcliffe or Charlotte Dacre, is fascinating and repulsive in equal measures.

Whether as a result of *Psycho*’s legacy, the influence of the more extreme *gialli* of Mario Bava and Dario Argento, or the impact of the “extreme mainstream” of *Straw Dogs* (Peckinpah 1971) and *Deliverance* (Boorman 1972), the early 1970s also saw the birth of the American slasher. Although Gothic Studies has readily accepted the serial killer as a Gothic figure, it has, unlike Horror Studies (see Clover 1992 and Dika 1990), had more trouble accepting the slasher genre as part of its canon. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper 1974), which follows the series of events leading a group of youths to their deaths at the hands of a chainsaw-wielding backwoods ex-butcher and his cannibal family, put a spin on the Southern Gothic subgenre. Its influence on films such as *The Hills Have Eyes* (Craven 1977) is undeniable, but the slasher would not have matured fully without *Halloween* (Carpenter 1978), *Friday the 13th* (Cunningham 1980) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven 1984). All of these introduced their own iconic supernatural monsters – Mike Myers, Jason Vorhees and Freddy Krueger – and turned both summer camps and neighborhoods into thoroughly Gothic spaces. The tide of slashers that saturated the market shortly after the release of these films had slightly abated by the late 1980s, but neoslashers, especially after the release of *Scream* (Craven 1996), breathed new intertextual life into the subgenre. Films such as *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Gillespie 1997) or *Urban Legend* (Blanks 1998) showed higher production values, more glamorous actors and detailed characterization, as well as a whodunit structure organized around concept rather than killer (Hutchings 2004: 211–13).

Gothic’s turn to corporeality is also evident from the even more critically reviled body horror of the mid-to-late 1970s and early 1980s. If Herschell Gordon Lewis and the affect-driven murder pieces of his *Blood Feast* (1963) inaugurated the gore subgenre, it was perhaps *Alien* (Scott 1979) and *The Exorcist* (Friedkin 1973) that gave carnage a mainstream appeal. The former features a key stomach-tearing scene that is now part of film history and was granted an early parody in *Spaceballs* (Brooks 1987). *The Exorcist*, which also did much to increase the amount of disturbing corporeal violence on screen by featuring vaginal self-harming, relished in Regan’s (Linda Blair) gradual decomposition via possession. Its emphasis on special effects, as well as the circumscription of the body as a thoroughly Gothic site marked

by claustrophobia and decay or unstoppable change, was felt in cult productions such as *The Evil Dead* (Raimi 1981), *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982) and David Cronenberg's body horror cycle. Of these, *Videodrome* (1983) and his remake of *The Fly* (1986), best exemplify the invention and explosion that encapsulate this subgenre's obsession with the limits of the body and intra or trans-human metamorphosis. But it is author-director-illustrator Clive Barker and his own distinctive brand of highbrow splatter that crowned the decade. His self-directed *Nightbreed* (1990) and *Candyman* (Rose 1992) would both go on to offer new urban monsters premised on social alterity (whether through class or race), but the liminal Gothic of *Hellraiser* (Barker 1987) was as instrumental to horror as his *Books of Blood* (1984–85) were to fiction. The film's distinctive transgression of the boundaries between pleasure and pain and Frank's (Sean Chapman) gradual "bone-structure-to-blood-and-muscle" resurrection are a testament to both the nightmare of embodiment and the inventive possibilities and mutability of flesh. *Hellraiser* created in Pinhead and the cenobites a new type of Gothic monster that both harked back to the Universal and Hammer past and looked ahead to the corporeal future.

For all its gruesomeness, body horror was still some distance away from the gloomier landscapes that Gothic horror would visit in the late 1990s and the new millennium. The Kafkaesque science-fiction of *Cube* (Natali 1997), which features a group of individuals stuck in a cube-like structure laden with booby-traps, is tinged with a nihilism that had already permeated the detective investigations of *Se7en* (Fincher 1995). The heart-breaking and inevitable ending of the latter, as well as its eye-for-an-eye ethos directly descended from *The Abominable Dr Phibes* (Fuest 1971), would be further exploited by the *Saw* films (2004–10), currently the most profitable horror franchise ever made. The trademark "live or die" contraptions that



Figure 33.2 Body Gothic: Cenobite Pinhead (Doug Bradley) and friends in Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987)

its characters wake up in are imbued with a retributational nature based on the supersession of one's perceived weaknesses through life-changing scarring. Another film, Eli Roth's *Hostel* (2005), helped institute *Saw*'s distinctive graphic look and bleak narrative into what would come to be (mis)labeled as "torture porn." The Gothic settings, trappings, mood and tone, together with the villainous quality of much of the horror that followed these two films, need to be acknowledged as distinctly and eminently Gothic. Films such as *A Serbian Film* (Spasojevic 2010) or *The Human Centipede II: Full Sequence* (Six 2011) have once again pushed the boundaries of decorum, instituting the Gothic as the thoroughly excessive genre it is often understood to be. The history of Gothic horror film since the 1960s is inextricable from the spectacle of transgressive and transgressed corporeality that colors it.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, S. (2007) *Celluloid Vampires: Life after Death in the Modern World*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Benshoff, H.M. (1997) *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Clover, C.J. (1992) *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dika, V. (1990) *Games of Terror: Halloween, Friday the 13th, and the Films of the Stalker Cycle*, Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Halberstam, J. (1995) *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hutchings, P. (2004) *The Horror Film*, Harlow: Longman.
- Page, E. (2007) *Gothic Fantasy: The Films of Tim Burton*, New York: Marion Boyars.

FURTHER READING

- Carolyn, A. (2008) *It Lives Again! Horror Movies in the New Millennium*, Surbiton: Telos. (An award-winning volume that traces the most relevant films released since 2000 and offers a few ideas about the contemporary state of the genre.)
- Hopkins, L. (2005) *Screening the Gothic*, Austin: University of Texas Press. (This is the only monograph to date specifically on Gothic film adaptations.)
- Newman, K. (2011) *Nightmare Movies: Horror on Screen Since the 1960s*, London: Bloomsbury. (Revised and updated in 2011, Newman's book still stands as a classic of cult horror criticism post-1960.)
- Pirie, D. (2009) *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema*, London: I.B. Tauris. (Originally published in 1973, this expanded edition covers British Gothic horror until 2008 and is particularly thorough on the Hammer period.)
- Rigby, J. (2000) *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema*, London: Reynolds and Hearn. (This volume covers the latter half of the twentieth century and, although it does not have a thematic Gothic focus, it covers all landmark British films.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GOTHIC CINEMA



Colette Balmain

Defining the Gothic in the context of non-western countries is a notoriously difficult endeavor, especially given that the Gothic is often theorized as the dark underside of the Enlightenment, and connected in this way with a particularly European experience of modernity and modernization. Within South Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand, three of the countries that constitute southeast Asia, the very existence of non-mimetic traditions and modernities has meant that there is no overt literary trajectory that can be temporally identified as marking the beginning of a Gothic tradition, while strange and uncanny tales which contain the language of the Gothic predate the colonial encounter with the West. In China, for instance, stories of the supernatural and the strange can be traced back as far as the fourth century BC, particularly to *Classic of Mountains and Seas/Shanhai Jing*, a book which combines details of geographical features with strange tales with folkloric origins, and to Gan Bao's anonymously published *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record /Sou-shen Chi*. Many of these tales, according to Henry J. Hughes, contain ambiguous moral lessons, and directly challenge the legacy of Confucianism (Hughes 2000). In Japan, *The Tale of the Genji/Genji Monogatari*, published during the eleventh century and attributed to Murasaki Shikibu, contains the very archetype of the jealous vengeful female ghost, a trope that has become a common feature in contemporary southeast Asian Gothic. Hughes tracks a trajectory of Gothic in East Asia from China to Japan. As he writes,

The East Asian Gothic tradition that begins with the Chinese zhiguai and chuangqi tales and develops in the stories of Pu Songling, arguably splits from the Gothic mode in the work of Lu Xun. East Asian Gothic reaches its full dark flowering across the sea in Japan.

(Hughes 2000)

Evidently, then, not only does the Gothic mode in southeast Asia substantially predate the encounter with the west, but it is also taken up in considerably different ways by different cultures at different times. Nonetheless, the complex political, historical and economic history of the region has resulted in a shared cultural

language that is inhabited by ghosts, goblins and all manner of mythical monsters, a common system of signs which is utilized in contemporary Gothic cinema to express ongoing concerns around the demise of notions of the traditional, however imaginary, with the deployment of western modernity throughout southeast Asia. Here, radical shifts and deformations in time and space feature prominently, as the process of modernization entails a break with the past and the instigation of a more alienated and alienating socio-economic system which places capital at the center, displacing and replacing the bonds of the community with the narcissism of individualism as it does so.

In his discussion of Asian Gothic, Ma argues that the economic cost of rapid modernization has a radical impact on both the structure of society and the location of the individual within it. This, Ma continues, has resulted in a fundamental disconnection between society and the self, especially as modernization demands that Asian countries metaphorically transform from children to adults without going through the appropriate intermediate stages of “growing up.” In Freudian terms, we might be tempted to describe this process as the negotiation of the Oedipal trajectory, the failure of which leads almost inexorably to cultural psychosis and schizophrenia. In China, however, the modernization of the household has entailed a cataclysmic leap from phonelessness to cellphones, without the mediation of the home phone to assist in the negotiation of space and time between the two technologies (Ma 2008: 187). Predictably, such rapid change might be said to have had a devastating human cost:

China’s meteoric rise as the twenty-first century’s factory is plagued by environmental devastation, disparity of rich and poor, human rights abuses, gender inequality, minority repression, and a mishmash of childish willfulness and moribundity.

(Ma 2008: 187)

In South Korea, too, the “miracle” that was rapid economic growth and expansion (colloquially known as the “miracle on Han river”) was made possible through the oppression of the working classes, the same classes who labored toward this miraculous transformation and yet whose labor only functioned to benefit those in power, leading to an unbridgeable divide between the poor and the uber-rich. Ma uses the analogy between the technological/cellphone and the biological/the body made up of cells, in which the cell functions as a metonym for the whole as a mechanism through which to articulate the centrality of disconnection to contemporary Asian Gothic texts. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that media horror is one of the dominant genres in contemporary southeast Asian Gothic cinema, from Hideo Nakata’s *Ring* (Japan, 1998) onward. Indeed, *The Killing Phone* (Sok Sameth, Cambodia, 2006), *Dial D for Demons* (Billy Tang, Hong Kong, 2000) and *Phone/Pon* (Ahn Byeong-ki, South Korea, 2002) all utilize the cellphone as a means/mechanism of death. In each instance, the cellphone, much like the technology itself, is unsettlingly imbued with the power to breach borders and violate boundaries, perhaps no more so than in the *One Missed Call* trilogy of films: *One Missed Call/Chakushin ari* (Takashi Miike, Japan, 2003); *One Missed Call 2/Chakushin ari 2* (Renpei Tsukamoto, Japan, 2005); and *One Missed Call Final/Chakushin ari final* (Manabu Asô, Japan, 2006), in which the phone virus is transmitted from Japan to South Korea before its origins

are eventually located in a rural village in Taiwan. Here, as elsewhere in media horror, technology allows for the circulation and transmission of ghosts from the past, spirits and specters the origins of which are to be located within traditional, non-western systems of belief.

In this chapter, I discuss *Three* (2002), an omnibus collection of three short films from Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand, as providing a paradigmatic example of southeast Asia Gothic. Southeast Asian Gothic, I suggest, can be defined in terms of both its transnationality and its intra-Asian intertextuality, especially around the liminal figure of the female ghost, a cipher that embodies both the displacement of the self and the disenfranchisement of the Other in the context of the enforcement of modernization and consumer capitalism. The premise for each of the films in the trilogy is the supernatural tale of horror. As Yeh and Ng point out, *Three's* Chinese title, *San geng* (three bells: 11:00pm), makes suggestive reference to “a specific time of night. As a stock phrase in many Chinese ghost films, ‘three bells’ conjures supernatural visitations, nocturnal chills, and the uncanny” (Yeh and Ng 2009: 149). *Three* was co-produced by Applause Pictures (Hong Kong), Nonzee Nimibutr (Thailand) and the South Korean Company b.o.m. Film production, it would appear, was undertaken with the domestic market in mind, unlike its sequel, *Three: Monsters* (repackaged as *Three . . . Extremes* by distribution company Tartan Asia Extreme), which was aimed at a more international market (Lee 2011: 105). Applause Pictures was behind the highly successful Pang Brothers’ classic, *The Eye* (Hong Kong/Singapore: 2002), and sought to repeat the success by bringing together three noted directors from across the region. Lee argues that the main feature of contemporary Asian horror is that it transgresses the boundaries between the regional and global. As she argues, “Asian horror is an intraregional and equally transregional construction that functions as a mediator between national film industries and both regional and global markets” (Lee 2011: 104).

While *The Eye* creates an intra-regional and intertextual Gothic through shifts in locations and languages within one narrative trajectory, *Three* offers three versions of ghostly hauntings by three different directors across three nations. In all three films, the figure of the ghost and/or demonic double is an ontological reality, an embodiment of the past which returns to threaten the homogeneity of modern time and space through the insistence on historical nonsynchronism. As Lim argues, “The ghost narrative opens the possibility of a radicalized concept of noncontemporaneity,” since “haunting or ghostly return precisely refuses the idea that things are just ‘left behind,’ that the past is inert and the present uniform” (Lim 2001: 288). This challenge to linear temporality, while according with Knee’s argument that time in southeast Asian Gothic functions to “evok[e] Taoist cyclicity or Buddhist karmic inevitability” (Knee 2009: 80), can also profitably be conceptualized through Freud’s notion of circularity and its relations to the uncanny: as Freud argues, the uncanny is produced through a sense of *déjà-vu*, an eternal return to the same place and a loss of temporal-spatial bearings.

HAUNTED PASTS

Three is made up of three approximately 40 minute films: *Memories* (South Korea, Kim Jee-woon), *The Wheel* (Thailand, Nonzee Nimibutr) and *Going Home* (Hong

Kong, Peter Chan). In *Memories*, a husband (Jeong Bo-seok) is unable to remember what happened to his wife (Kim Hye-soo), who seems to have disappeared, while the wife, similarly unable to recollect the past, wakes up in a deserted street. As such, the title *Memories* refers to the memories of both husband and wife, and through which the narrative enigma is constructed and eventually resolved. The second film, *The Wheel*, displaces the viewer from the present reality of the concrete modern city to a temporally distant past in a rural location in Thailand, where a rich but ailing puppeteer, Master Tao (Komgrich Yuttayong), believing that his puppets are cursed, asks that they be destroyed at the moment of his demise. However, greed makes the Master of a Khon troupe of performers, Master Tong (Pongsanart Vinsiri), covet the puppets, and in so doing, he brings about death and destruction to the troupe. The last film is Peter Chan's haunting *Going Home*, in which a policeman, Wai (Eric Tsang), finds himself kidnapped by his strange neighbor, Mr. Yu (Leon Lai), when he enquires whether his neighbor has seen his young missing son, Cheung (Li Ting-Fung).

Kim Jee-woon's *Memories* is predominately located on a concrete modern housing estate, ironically called "New Town": a place where dreams are supposed to come true but which, in truth, is little more than the embodiment of the postmodern alienation and isolation that Ma identifies as being central to Asian Gothic. The estate seems deserted, marked by a chilling absence of people, as do the restaurant and streets that the wife has to navigate in order to make her way "home." Such liminal places give birth to ghosts, ghosts that are remnants of the past and remainders of an origin that is always a nostalgic fantasy of national identity, but one which nonetheless insists that history cannot and must not be forgotten. This is an uncanny and abject space, constructed through the labor of South Korean workers, whose oppression and suffering laid the very possibility of South Korea's economic miracle. Here, South Korea is a place of fractured relationships and fragmented identities, as demonstrated by the literal and metaphorical distance between the husband and the wife, as well as through the *unheimlich* nature of the domestic spaces which are contained within the film's postmodern urban imaginary. This metaphor of disconnection in *Memories* is literalized in the fact that while the husband continually checks his answerphone for a message from his wife, the wife is simultaneously trying to call him but only ever to access a recorded voice-message.

While, at the end of the film, it transpires that the husband had in fact murdered his wife, it is not evident in the preceding scenes that the wife is in fact a ghost, a soul in transit, who is drawn back to the home in order to break her earthly ties: she must remember what has happened, and her husband must be reminded of what he did. The past must be remembered in order to effect the resolution of the present. The fact that no one takes any notice of her – not the few people in the restaurant, nor the taxi-driver whom she asks to take her home – marks her out as invisible, an invisibility that is considerably confounded in her doubled status as both ghost and woman. There can be little doubt that *Memories* owes a debt to the highly codified conventions of contemporary J-Horror, with its archetypal "wronged woman" of patriarchal abuse returning as virgin ghost, dressed in white, with long dark hair obscuring her features and staccato-like movement. These, together with strangely *unheimlich* locations and minimalist soundtracks, had been staple ingredients of the genre from *Ring* onward. Indeed, what *Memories* in its intertextual allusion to the

tradition of J-Horror succeeds in affirming is the transnational and intra-Asian intertextuality of contemporary southeast Asian Gothic, a consideration that is present within both the mechanics of production and the thematic concerns of the narrative itself, and a feature which Lim defines as the main characteristic of East Asian cinema over the last twenty years (Lim 2011: 29). Certainly, many intra-Asian intertextual references are apparent within *Memories*: other films specifically referenced in the text include Kurosawa's *Pulse/Kairo* (Japan, 2001) and Shimizu's *Ju-On: The Grudge/Ju-On* (Japan, 2002). Although *Ju-On* was released the same year as *Three*, it is likely that Shimizu's two made-for-television dramas, *Ju-on: The Curse* and *Ju-on: The Curse 2*, had been widely circulated throughout the region. Transnationality and intertextuality are not just confined to stock characters and archetypal stories, but also contained at the level of aesthetics and the sonic register. As Lim points out, "Transnationalism is often moved into the very fabric of a film's narrative, aesthetic,

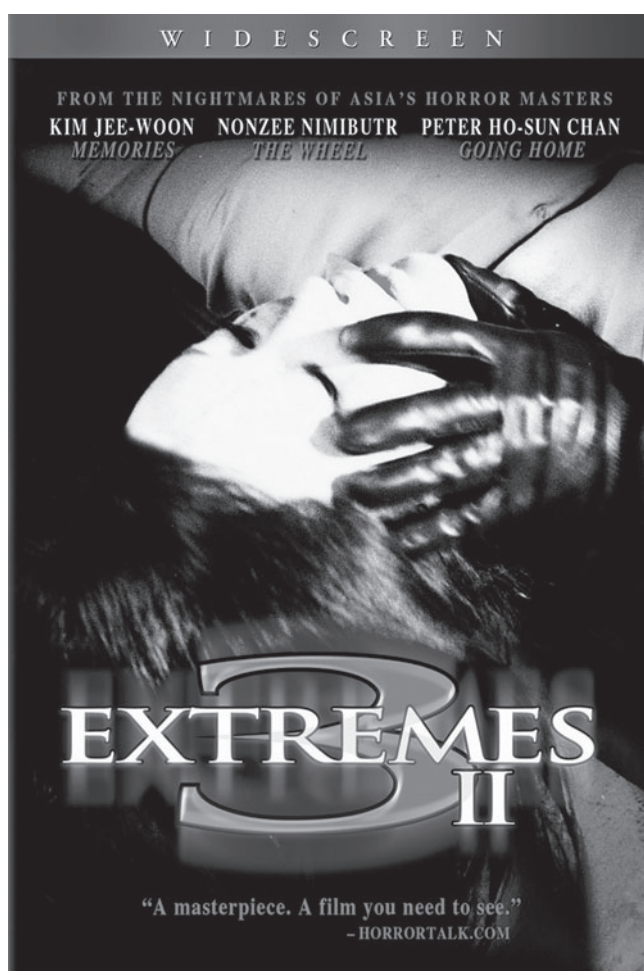


Figure 34.1 Kim Ji-woon's *Memories* (2002) on the cover of the Asia Extreme release of *Three*

star body, and mode of address” (Lim 2011: 29). The stillness and silence through which *Memories* unfolds reconstructs the cinematic isolation that, as I have argued elsewhere, provides the very foundation of J-Horror (Balmain 2006); in a South Korean context, this highlights the parasitic nature of contemporary southeast Asian Gothic cinema. The husband’s externalization of his barely suppressed rage onto his wife repeats patterns seen in *Ju-on: The Curse* and *Ju-on: The Curse 2*, suggesting that female oppression and abuse is a transnational concern in contemporary southeast Asia societies. In one notable scene, the husband is talking to his wife’s sister, denying any knowledge of what has happened to his wife as the camera pans in on his hands, tearing paper, and down to his restless feet, tapping the ground. This is reminiscent of the revelation scene in *Ju-On: The Grudge* toward its bloody climax. The concealment of the wife’s body in a bag, moreover, references similar bloody concealments in Miike’s *Audition/Odison* (Japan, 1999) and Shimizu’s *Ju-On: The Curse 2*. At the same time, while *Memories* utilizes a shared cinematic language and iconography of the female ghost that is aligned with that of other Southeast Asian films, the interrogation of the gap between remembering and forgetting in the film utilizes the motif of amnesia as a response to personal/political trauma, a concern which is arguably the predominant feature of contemporary South Korean horror cinema or K-horror (Balmain 2013).

While the connections between *Memories* and other southeast Asian Gothic horror films are clear, Nimibutr’s *The Wheel* seems to resist immediate generic recognition within a template of Southeast Asian horror. This explains, perhaps, the relative lack of critical analysis that the film has received. As Lee contends, *The Wheel* is “a ghost fable with strong ethnic characteristics” (Lee 2011: 106). Prior to *The Wheel*, director/producer Nonzee Nimibutr was best known for his 1999 retelling of Nang Nak, one of the most well-known of all Thai folk-legends. Given that *Nang Nak* itself fits neatly within a Gothic schemata of wronged women and virgin ghosts, it is significant that Nimibutr in *The Wheel* deliberately chose to undertake something far less recognizably “Asian” and something more specifically located within Thai culture and history. At the same time, with its uncanny doublings between puppets and people, the demonic child and Buddhist sensibilities, *The Wheel* constructs an intra-regional Gothic based upon a shared history and mythology. The film begins with a short explanatory note about the class-based conflict between *khon* performers (a classical Thai masked dance) and *hun lakorn lek* theatrical puppeteers (a relatively recent tradition dated to 1901). While the *khon* performers struggle to make a living, proponents of *hun lakorn lek*, as their highly embellished puppets themselves indicate, are wealthy, and enjoy the luxury of performing on ceremonial occasions instead of having to eke out a meager living on the street like their poorer counterparts. *The Wheel* opens with these words:

For generations, a select few skilled in the art of *Hun Lakorn Lek* has staged magical performances using elaborate puppets, telling stories of gods, heroes and demons. Theirs is a privileged life, one of wealth and recognition. In contrast, on the crowded streets, the *khon* performers hide behind masks to tell the same stories, yet their life is one of poverty and lowly social status. And so the *khon* performers covet the precious puppets, despite the dreaded rumor that each puppet is protected by a curse, and only its rightful owner can bring it life.

The Wheel begins by juxtaposing close-up shots of ornate puppets sinking under water with the drowning bodies of two young teenagers, Vuan and Daeng. This opening sequence functions to signal the puppets as ghostly Gothic doppelgängers, representing the death of the self (in terms of a Buddhist sensibility) at the hands of modern consumerist capitalism, an economic ideology with which *hun lakorn lek* is implicitly associated throughout the film. This “uncanny” doubling is foregrounded throughout by means of frequent cross-cutting between the “puppets” and “people,” including one scene in which a puppet is brutally pulled apart by a young girl, Bua, causing Master Tong (Pongsanart Vinsiri) to keel over in pain as his leg gives way beneath him. The tradition of *hun lakorn lek* requires that the puppets be passed down from generation to generation, and thus the craft has become the province of a privileged few; in Thailand, in fact, there remains only one theatre company that performs this type of theatrical puppetry, The Joe Louis Puppet Theatre, established in 1996, and the sole guardian of this traditional type of Thai art-form. The puppets are simulacra of traditional Thai puppets known as Hun Luang or Hun Yai (The Great Puppet), which were used for Royal Performance in the first half of the nineteenth century. Smaller versions, called *hun lek*, replaced the great puppets, and were originally made by Chinese émigrés in Bangkok [15]. Merging a real event (the burning of all of Joe Louis’ puppets, except one, in a house fire in 1999) with the fictional scene of cursed puppets, *The Wheel* generates a sense of the uncanny which in part relies on a shared local knowledge. As Fuhrmann notes in relation to *Nang Nak*:

The cracks in the ghostly world and the little private jokes that Nak makes moreover interpellate the viewer as someone who shares knowledge not only with Nak but also with a cultural community that stretches from Southeast Asia to South Asia.

(Fuhrmann 2009: 230)

We subsequently discover that all of Master Tao’s troupe, with the exception of a teenage boy, Gaan (Suwinit Panjamawat), have fled, fearing the curse of the puppets. Gaan has been entrusted by his Master to drown the puppets so that no one can steal them. However, Master Tong’s avarice causes him to ignore the warnings and seek to keep the puppets for himself, even going to the lengths of dismembering and reconstructing them as a symbolic gesture of rebirth, a refashioning of the puppets in his own image according to the narcissistic drives of late capitalism. Master Tong’s greed leads to the grotesque death of most of his troupe, with the *khon* masks themselves becoming cursed and causing death, and the young child, Bua, becoming possessed by the puppets’ latent evil. Here, the community is fractured by the consumerist desire for wealth and prestige. As Ma argues in relation to contemporary Asian culture and society, “egotism and self-interest rather than altruism and compassion appear to drive civilization” (Ma 2008: 188). As such, *The Wheel* provides a moral warning about the fetishization of the commodity, one which is consonant with Buddhist notions of karma and the need to empty out the self in order to achieve oneness, while suggesting, in the final scene, that unless this happens, death and destruction will be endlessly repeated.

While *The Wheel* might be short on outright scares, and while its plot and structure might be overly complicated, the film offers an alternative to the more

conventional shock and scare tactics associated with Asian horror cinema; as a text, it also foregrounds the importance of context to our understanding of southeast Asian Gothic in general. Indeed, intra-regional intertextuality is made apparent in the film through the utilization of the puppets and the theatre as a backdrop to this tale of terror. Not only does masked dance and theatrical puppetry in southeast Asia have a long history deriving from India (around the time of the birth of Christ) and China (dated back to the Han dynasty), but traditional theatre has also provided a source of rich imagining for southeast Asian Gothic, particularly in the cycle of Japanese Edo-Gothic films of the 1960s and 1970s. One of the archetypal tales of Southeast Asian theatre is the *Ramayana* (The Journey of Rama), an epic poem about the struggle between good and evil with 5,000 verses, attributed to the Indian Poet, Valmiki, and dating back to 300–500 BC. It seems likely that a regional variation of the *Ramayana* is performed by the *khon* dancers in *The Wheel*, a detail which would be in keeping with the Buddhist sensibility of the film itself. This is consistent, too, with Nimibutr's reworking of the legend of Nam Nak into a "Buddhist soteriological theme" in 1999 (Fuhrmann 2009: 226). Furthermore, the demonization of the girl-child, Bua, who problematically becomes sexualized through her possession by ghosts of the past, can be interpreted as a figuration of the vengeful ghost, a trope which in Thailand Gothic, as elsewhere in southeast Asia, creates continuity between female sexuality and monstrosity. As always, this figure has its roots in female oppression and the need to construct a phantasmatic sense of nation through the sublimation of female desire. At the same time, the fact that Bua transforms from innocent child to sexualized adult through contact with the possessed dolls articulates the rapid transformation of a rural society to an industrialized one, a process which eschews the normative Oedipal trajectory and which, following Freud, results in a split subjectivity that is rendered uncanny through its disconnection from its new social context. However, while Fuhrmann contends that "the uncanny decidedly stands in for unresolved social and political crises," it does not necessarily "offer a feminist vision of social transformation" as it does in *Nang Nak* (20). And as in *Nang Nak*, *The Wheel* does not offer a narrative of reparation; instead, the viewer is led to believe that the events are doomed to be endlessly repeated without variation.

The final film in the trilogy is Peter Chan's *Going Home*, a poignant meditation on the nature of love in a postmodern world in which a sense of home is both spatially and temporally disrupted. Originally the second film in the trilogy, *Going Home* is set in a rundown and deserted apartment complex in Hong Kong, where ghosts, in the absence of people, proliferate, and where the debris that litters the screen signifies lives and loves past. Police officer Chan and his son Cheung move into the soon-to-be-demolished apartment complex, in which the only other tenants are Mr. Yu (Leon Lai) and his wife Hai'er (Eugenia Yuan). The superintendent explains to Chan that Hai'er is paralyzed from the waist down. A tracking shot follows Chan and Cheung as they walk past derelict flats when they are shown around the complex, weaving in and out of the empty spaces and broken walls. As they pass Yu and his wheelchair-bound wife, a young girl dressed in red runs out, and though nobody else sees her, she catches Cheung's eye. This child, it transpires, is the unborn child of Yu and Hai'er, her ghostly presence signaling the liminality of this postmodern Gothic space. As Yeh and Ng argue:

Dressed in red, the little girl's uncanny presence is clearly depicted as the supernatural other. She never speaks a word and is invisible to most human beings except Wai's little boy, who then follows her and disappears from the intelligible human world. But the visual contrast between her red dress and the greyish, icy surroundings of the empty housing estate loudly announces her existence, pointing to the feeble threshold between life and death, and consciousness and unconsciousness.

(Yeh and Ng 2009: 21)

Unlike the wife in *Memories*, the child ghost is not the archetypal vengeful ghost that tends to be associated with Asian Gothic, but rather a soul in transit that is unable to move on without resolution of the past in the present. She is signaled out as being different by her vibrant red dress, in stark contrast to the greyish green that dominates the *mise en scène* of the desolate apartment block.

Chan and Cheung move in, and when Cheung, a few days later, disappears during the night, Chan visits Yu in order to ask if he has seen him. Peering in the apartment from the door, Chan is horrified to realize that Ha'er is in fact dead rather than paralyzed. Seeing this, Yu knocks Chan out, and Chan wakes up, bound, in the apartment. Yet, rather than being a monster who has murdered his wife, it transpires that Yu is caring for her, administering traditional Chinese medicine which, he hopes, will cure her of her fatal liver cancer and restore her to life. The detail of his everyday life – washing Hai'er; putting on her make-up; submerging her body in herbs; and talking to her – is revealed to us through Chan's gaze as he moves from a position of fear to sympathy, taking the viewer along with him. However, before the process can be completed, and on the day that Hai'er is due to be resurrected, the police come looking for Chan, and discover him in Yu's apartment. The ambulance comes to take away Hai'er's body to the mortuary, and a distressed Yu runs after it, only to be hit by a van as he crosses the road. As Yu dies alone in the street, the camera switches to the inside of the ambulance, panning in on his wife's moving fingers and a solitary tear running down her face, as she finally dies.

Going Home presents us with a Hong Kong that is structured between the familiar and the unfamiliar, a cityscape in which “home” becomes *unheimlich* through the persistence of the past within the present, and in which ghosts and people co-exist temporally in the same space. This overwhelming sense of the uncanny is also generated through the use of technology which captures an absent presence, from the photographs of “home” kept by Chan, through to the videotapes that Yu plays in order to remind his wife of their life together. True to the conventions of southeast Asian Gothic, *Going Home* begins and ends in a photographer's studio, foregrounding the mode's intra-regional intertextuality around media horror.

In the opening scene, we witness Yu having his photograph taken on his own, against a nostalgic “imaginary” pastoral background, while his “daughter,” whom only the photographer can see, waits outside of the frame, unable to join her father. The final scene in the photographer's studio pictures the family together for the first time, suggesting that “going home” for Yu was only ever possible through death and stressing the imaginary nature of a nostalgic desire for the past. Yeh and Ng argue that photographs in both *Going Home* and Fruit Chan's *Dumplings from Three . . . Extremes* are utilized to link together the past and the present, while foregrounding the unequal status of Chinese émigrés in Hong Kong:

Photos, in print or electronic format, are images of the past. They are used in *Going Home* and *Dumplings* as crucial narrative links to the past (in China). For Chinese immigrants who are treated as ghosts in Hong Kong, photos from the past help maintain their present lives in the affluent but alienated Hong Kong. Inside Yu's home, a TV monitor constantly plays a home video of Hai'er talking as if Yu was listening behind the camera. Here, memories of the past turn into moving pictures, bringing the ambiguity of Hai'er's living death to the fore.

(Yeh and Ng 2009: 154)

Here, as elsewhere in southeast Asian Gothic, ghosts are figured as simultaneously preternatural and technological, hybrids of tradition and modernity, East and West, a profound articulation of loss, be it of self, of home or of family. Technology facilitates the interpenetration of the present and the past, creating a liminal space between life and death and giving rise to certain ghosts in the machine. Takahashi discusses the uncanny status of modern technology as follows:

Suppose there is an actor. We have a photograph of him. No one can tell whether he is a ghost or human being just by looking at his photo. In the world of cinema, such a strange situation can emerge. Some time ago, strange rumors about an actress in a TV commercial spread among children. In fact, the actress had been dead, and when we watched on TV was none other than the dead, it said. Of interest is that this rumor saliently indicates the limits of the photographic image; it cannot clearly tell a human being from a ghost.

(Takahashi quoted in Kinoshita 2009: 114)



Figure 34.2 Photographing Loneliness in Peter Chan's *Going Home* (2002)

For Roland Barthes, the photograph makes the past visibly present: “The Photograph, for the first time, puts an end to this resistance: henceforth the past is as certain as the present, what we see on paper is as certain as what we touch” (Barthes 1981: 87). But at the same time, and as Lim points out, the photograph provides us with “an uncanny and conflicted sense of temporality” through which “we feel, with a pang, that the dead have yet to die” (Lim 2001: 309). This uncanny sense of temporality is captured in Hai’er’s liminal state, as the ontological reality of her body marks her out, much like a photograph, to be both present and absent.

Hai’er’s liminality is also an expression of the invisibility of Chinese mainlanders in Hong Kong; like the wife in *Memories*, she is both metaphorically and literally a ghost. While traditional Chinese medicine offers a “cure” to this anomalous state by returning Hai’er to life, this sense of renewal is thwarted when the police, symbolic of dominant ideology, take her away and in so doing, directly cause Yu’s death.

I SEE GHOSTS

While the sequel to *Three, Three . . . Extremes* deals with psychological monsters who might conceivably be produced by any society, the ghosts in *Three* offer a more nuanced and situated view of their national origins through drawing on intra-Asian conventions and localized knowledge and belief systems. Both *Memories* and *Going Home* are narratives of displacement and disconnection, in which home becomes an uncanny space inhabited by ghosts from the past; traumatic revenants foreground the importance of history and historical knowledge, and serve as a template for the resubjection of the split self that is created through capitalist systems of desire. These are narratives of loneliness, a southeast Asian Gothic set amongst desolate postmodern landscapes, almost devoid of people and color, all of which, rather than associating transnationalism with an idealized cosmopolitanism, render it synonymous with alienation and isolation:

The intertextual thematic construction of this cinema of loneliness is achieved, in many cases, by introducing characters who are displaced from their homelands and thus feeling dislocated in a foreign land whose language and culture are alien to them as much as they are alien to the diegetic setting.

(Lim 2011: 23)

As we have seen, intra-regional intertextuality is a key feature of southeast Asian Gothic. In all three films, the liminal figure of the female ghost/child functions to represent what Lim identifies as “a radicalized nonsynchronous conception of history” (Lim 2011: 313). In other words, the only way to repair the wounds of the past is to reintegrate the past and present, the child and the adult, gestures through which the uncanny might be defeated and a stable society reconstructed in its place. As Byron argues, “The need to reject the false universalizing perspective of the global [is necessary] in order to reclaim one’s own vision” (Byron 2008: 39).

REFERENCES

- Balmain, C. (2006) "Inside the Well of Loneliness: Towards a Definition of the Japanese Horror Film," *Japanese Studies*, May 2, 2006. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/discussionpapers/2006/Balmain.html>> (accessed December 20, 2012).
- (2013) *South Korean Horror Cinema: History, Memory, Identity*, Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press/Fisher Imprints.
- Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida*, New York: Hill and Wang.
- Bliss, Lim (2001) "Spectral Times: The Ghost Film as Historical Allegory," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, 9.2: 287–329.
- Byron, G. (2008) "'Where meaning collapses': Tunku Halim's *Dark Demon Rising* as Global Gothic" in A. Ng (ed.) *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film and Anime*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 19–33.
- Fuhrmann, A. (2009) "Nang Nak-Ghost Wife: Desire, Embodiment, and Buddhist Melancholia in Contemporary Thai Ghost Film," *Discourse*, 31.3: 220–47.
- Hughes, H.J. (2000) "Familiarity of the Strange: Japan's Gothic tradition," *Criticism*: 4.21. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism/vol42/iss1/3>> (accessed December 20, 2012).
- Kinoshita, C. (2009) "The Mummy Complex: Kurosawa Kiyoshi's *loft* and J-Horror," in J. Choi and M. Wada-Marciano (eds) *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 103–22.
- Knee, A. (2009) "The Pan-Asian outlook of *The Eye*," in J. Choi and M. Wada-Marciano (eds) *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 69–84.
- Lee, N.J.Y. (2011) "Asia as Regional Signifier and Transnational Genre-Branding: The Asian Horror Omnibus movies *Three* and *Three . . . Extremes*," in V.P.Y. Lee (ed.) *East Asian Cinemas: Regional Flows and Global Transformations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 103–17.
- Lim, S.H. (2001) "Transnational Trajectories in Contemporary East Asian Cinemas," in V.P.Y. Lee (ed.) *East Asian Cinemas: Regional Flows and Global Transformations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 15–32.
- Ma, S.M. (2008) "Asian Cell and Horror," in A. Ng (ed.) *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film and Anime*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 187–209.
- Yeh, E.Y. and Ng, N.H. (2009) "Magic, Medicine, Cannibalism: The China Demon in Hong Kong Horror," in J. Choi and M. Wada-Marciano (eds) *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 145–60.

FURTHER READING

- Balmain, C. (2008) *Introduction to Japanese Horror Film*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (A general introduction to Japanese horror cinema with a useful chapter on Edo Gothic cinema.)
- Galloway, P. (2006) *Asia Shock: Horror and Dark Cinema from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand*, London: Stone Bridge Press. (A good introductory book on southeast Asia horror cinema, especially in relation to Thai horror, not currently covered elsewhere.)
- Gates, P. and Funnell, L. (2011) *Transnational Asian Identities in Pan-Pacific Cinemas*, New York: Routledge. (Excellent book on transnational exchanges in contemporary Asian cinemas.)

- McRoy, J. (ed.) (2005) *Japanese Horror Cinema*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (Edited collection on Japanese horror cinema, and a key work in the field.)
- Ng, A. (ed.) (2009) *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film and Anime*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland. (Indispensible book for anyone interested in Asian Gothic across different media types.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

DEFINING A GOTHIC AESTHETIC IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART



Gilda Williams

If you google “the Gothic” and hit “Images,” on the screen before you will appear a wildly disparate – if oddly predictable – set of images. Desktop wallpaper featuring a misty forest dominated by a pointed-arch ruin in silhouette and sprinkled with ominous, hooded monks. Bela Lugosi, in a publicity still from Tod Browning’s vintage *Dracula* (1931). Goth babes in ripped tights and figure-hugging corsets. A vaulted, shadowy, crypt-like space beneath a cathedral in Prague. Henry Fuseli’s painting *The Nightmare* (1781–82). A haunted house, silhouetted against the night sky, perched on a hill. A scene from *The X-Files* (Carter 1993–2002) featuring a terrifying cyber-tunnel.

Taken together, these images certainly conjure up a “Gothic” vision, but how might we begin to define it? What might we mean today by a “Gothic aesthetic,” and is this a valid term of aesthetic description where modern and contemporary visual art is concerned? What constitutes, in other words, the cluster of thematic and visual triggers that prompt the “Gothic” descriptor? Somewhat superficially, one might begin by noting that all the googled images are “dark,” with a prevalence of the color black, but there are many “dark” things – outer space; a bowler hat; a kind of tea – that are black in color, without being distinctly “Gothic.” So, dark, Gothic things are dark in a particularly “Gothic” way, and we are instantly caught in a tautological loop which seems inescapable.

In contemporary art discourse, the term “Gothic” carries little critical weight, and is usually reduced to describing motif-laden works typically featuring skulls, gore and other “spooky” iconography. Within the established contemporary art world, such “gothicky” artworks are received with a degree of suspicion, if not outright derision. Contemporary art critics often lament that “Gothic” contemporary art is merely that which features Halloweenish tableaux oozing with fake blood, bearing none of the revolutionary power of its claimed literary antecedents, from Sade to Edgar Allan Poe. Yet one notes the many respected contemporary artists producing works which intuitively earn the Gothic descriptor but do not feature the usual slew of “gothicky” motifs: Louise Bourgeois’s shadowy, memory-laden *Cell* installations (Figure 35.1); Aïda Ruilova’s dramatically *noir*-ish videos, with their sense of foreboding and picturing of “dead” time; Nathaniel Mellors’s “black-box” installations

such as *Giantbun* (2009) (Figure 35.2), comprising Frankensteinian animatronics and film narratives that overlap past and present. How might we define the Gothic aesthetic that, as observed in these important contemporary artworks and in the culture at large, ventures beyond a tiresome catalogue of motifs, from vampires to angels in black shrouds, crosses to coffins?

Perhaps the conundrum of establishing meaningful parameters for a Gothic aesthetic stems from the routinely overlooked fact that the term was originally an art-historical rather than a literary one. The question today is not, as is often assumed in literary studies, solely one of translating a literary term into visually based media, but of returning “Gothic” to art after a very lengthy sojourn predominantly elaborated within another discipline. The term *gotico*, of course, was introduced into artistic and cultural discourse by art writers in Renaissance Italy in reference to post-antiquity art and architecture. Within Enlightenment culture of the eighteenth century, the term was applied to a pointed-arch revivalist architecture which mimicked the Middle Ages; subsequently, “Gothic” in English took an unprecedented turn to literature when Horace Walpole imaginatively (if confusingly) subtitled the second edition of his terror tale *The Castle of Otranto* “A Gothic Story” in 1765. In today’s hybrid usage of the term, distinctions between the early literary and art-historical sources are often blurred; for example, in horror film the haunted house is located in a pointed-arch-style pile, a convenience exemplified in Robert Wise’s *The Haunting* (1963). More recently, Peter Parker’s monstrously



Figure 35.1 Louise Bourgeois, *CELL VII*, 1998



Figure 35.2 Nathaniel Mellors, *Giantbum*, 2009

arachnid transformation in *Spider-Man 3* (Sam Raimi, 2007) occurs in a Gothic cathedral. “Gothic” is plagued with such slippages, rendering a fastidious untangling of disciplinary strands almost impossible; this chronic cross-disciplinary seepage should probably be recognized today as endemic within the Gothic vision. Independently of its post-Enlightenment history, art historians still apply the term “Gothic” to describe western medieval art and architecture of the period 1100–1500, although some architectural historians have questioned even this standard art-based usage. In the popular, literary-based meaning and imaging of “Gothic” today, however, the tradition of terror literature, horror cinema and the reinvention of the term within the goth subcultural socio-music scene has all but eclipsed its distant art-historical origins. In art, “Gothic” may have to share two meanings: one art-based and historical, the other literature-based and contemporary.

ORIGINS OF THE TERM “GOTHIC”

As critics have long acknowledged, the term cannot be grounded in any precise or conclusive origins; it would be nonsensical, for example, to assert that authentic Gothic architecture is that solely built by the Visigoths and Ostrogoths. As Paul Frankl pointed out in his authoritative *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries* (1960), even Renaissance art

historians first experimenting with the term were aware that “Gothic” served as a shorthand for waves of various invading northern peoples (Frankl 1960: 254). The definitive invasion of Rome in 410 AD by Alaric, leader of the Visigoths, was mythologized as the final blow which irreversibly doomed the Eternal City, singling out this tribe – rather than the equally marauding Lombards, Vandals, Huns, and others – as deserving of special vilification by the Italians. The exact term “Gothic” – rather than, for example, “Germanic” or “modern,” all synonyms in Renaissance Italy to describe the “inferior” art and architecture of the invading foreigners – appears first, and just twice, in the mid-fifteenth century. Establishing itself within critical vocabulary across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “Gothic” originally referred to almost a millennium of non-Classical art and architecture produced in the until-then unnamed post-antiquity “style” which the Italians had unhappily inherited. Across the Renaissance and beyond, the term “Gothic” ambiguously combined varying shades of meaning, from “low class” to “monstrous,” “barbarous,” “Northern,” “foreign,” “uncivilized,” “awkward,” and more. The term could also refer to any artistic artifact produced between the fall of Rome and the fifteenth century, without attaching itself to the biases of critical evaluation.

Shades of these many meanings persist and spread over the centuries, with some gaining momentum (“monstrosity”) and others being shed (the term’s once powerful nationalistic connotations). Although Gothic’s semantic unwieldiness has been intensified in recent years, serving as a term applied equally to Wells Cathedral as to teenage vampire TV, its imprecision is not new: in many ways the term started life on uncertain etymological ground, and has remained stranded there ever since. I will argue, however, that of all the ancient, art-based resonances gathered within “Gothic,” there is today a predominant, single, ongoing theme: the representation of an unresolved inherited condition, persisting unwanted into the present, aspects of the term that are most useful when applying it as critical descriptor to the field of modern and contemporary visual art.

Indeed, the subjection of the present to the past, and to undesirable forces beyond our control, has emerged as the term’s principal thematic inheritance, born from its earliest (art-historical) meanings, and which Gothic literature potently absorbed. In the long history of Gothic film and literature in the present, the “contaminating Northern tribe” that Renaissance Italian art writers first vilified has been replaced by any variety of unwelcome circumstances: it might be child abuse, drug addiction, slavery, psychosis or unrequited love. It might be sexual violence, religious excess, capitalist oppression, racism, colonial legacies, terrorist attack, vampirism, possessed software, an ancient Egyptian curse, talking killer toys, *ad infinitum*. In all cases, the key Gothic pattern sees a lost history or an uninvited force impose itself on the present as a kind of haunting, demanding our urgent attention and resolution. This theme is often expressed in a set of familiar visual and conceptual symbols of a persisting past: ruins, the undead, history-laden objects, talking pictures, long-lost diaries and letters, haunted places or foreboding machinery. All of these Gothic (literary) tropes can be similarly updated in myriad forms, from cybernetically undead replicants to immortal e-mails which refuse supernaturally to be deleted. Prior to tracing these impulses as they are manifested across a selection of modern and contemporary art-works, it is perhaps necessary to reflect on their

historical origins in some well-known works of the late eighteenth century. In a word, what is “Gothic” about so iconically “Gothic” an image as Fuseli’s *The Nightmare*?

THE NIGHTMARE AND THE GOTHIC

In the popular imagination, the painting *The Nightmare* (see Figure 28.4 in this volume) by the Swiss-born, London-based painter Henry Fuseli provides the emblematic visual parallel to the literature of horror and terror emerging around the same time. In Fuseli’s theater-like space behind a curtain, violent animals emerge mid-ground out of the darkness and remain still, as if frozen in time, while a powerful light, strong enough to throw the dark shadow of a demon’s pointed ears on the back wall, is eerily emitted from the woman’s phosphorescently pale, swooning body. Of course, much is shared across the disciplines of literature and visual art here, including a young, desirable female innocent under threat; mysterious, nocturnal interiors and visitors; implications of impermissible erotic temptations; monsters and the supernatural. Accordingly, it has long become a commonplace to associate early Gothic writing with contemporaneous visual art trafficking in terror and dark fantasy: another artwork habitually evoked in this context is Francisco Goya’s *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, c. 1797–99.

Art-historically speaking, however, to call *The Nightmare* “Gothic” is somewhat untenable. Without question, Fuseli and other cultured people of his day would have been perfectly baffled by such a term of description. As E.J. Clery has shown, literary texts of the period were more often referred to as “ghost stories,” “modern romances” and “tales of terror” (Clery 2002: 37), while, for art historians, well into the late twentieth century, “Gothic” meant almost exclusively an association with the Middle Ages, with its implicit notions of anti-Classicism. The self-taught Fuseli considered himself a devoutly classical artist, and would have been confused if not repelled by a conception of his work as “Gothic” (although he admired elements of medieval culture). (See Chapter 28 in this volume.) Fuseli associated medieval illuminated manuscripts with the “savage and infant tastes” of such “primitive” art-forms as Egyptian hieroglyphs; both of these distant precedents the artist condemned for their flat and unvaried surfaces as belonging more to graphic art than fine art, an epistemological and hierarchical distinction well intact in Fuseli’s day (Stafford 1985: 355). His literary sources were Shakespeare and Greek playwrights, among others, never current popular stories, which were inadmissible for Fuseli’s high-artistic, classicist ambitions. Walpole, in turn, reportedly wrote in his copy of the 1782 Royal Academy catalogue, next to the entry for *The Nightmare*, a single word: “shocking”; although he admired the painter’s technical bravura, one senses that the resistance between Fuseli and some literati of the genre was perhaps mutual (Frayling, in Myrone 2006: 10).

In 2006, the Tate Britain exhibition and catalogue *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* attempted to draw valid parallels between the Romantic era’s literature of terror and a range of contemporaneous artworks. Curator Martin Myrone observes but dismisses the works’ evident shared visual qualities of dark, psycho-sexual subject-matter and shifts the discussion toward the conjoined impetuses of political radicalism and mass-audience cultural strategies.

For Myrone, what unites Fuseli's art with the literature of terror is the revolutionary climate of social unrest at the end of the eighteenth century and the contemporaneous emergence of bourgeois consumerism. Vividly popular artworks and novels trafficking in the sensational and the historically evocative suited the tastes of this new public, avid for spellbinding cultural products (Myrone 2006: 35). While this argument sheds important light on shared motivations and audiences, this socio-economic common ground feels somewhat inadequate: *The Nightmare* still *looks* quintessentially "Gothic." Art historian Maryanne C. Ward has demonstrated the direct influence that *The Nightmare* had on passages of Shelley's *Frankenstein* written a few decades later, aligning literary Gothicism directly with the painting. Is it possible to define an aesthetic category of "Gothic" within artistic discourse, a category that carries critical weight, and one which is capable of accommodating, describing and accurately accounting for a painting such as Fuseli's *The Nightmare*?

The answer lies, perhaps, in charting the ways in which the original implications to the term "Gothic" eventually began to accrete into the sense in which it is most commonly used today, namely as a synonym for the aesthetic of the dark, the grotesque, the macabre and the supernatural. Numerous theorists have advanced explanations for the perplexing shift from art to literature. Frankl, for instance, asserts that fragments of Gothic architecture were evoked in eighteenth-century literary works for the sake of establishing the desired mood and location of eeriness (olde England), while instilling a flavor of religiosity, superstition and poetry belonging to an earlier age – a "magic" which Enlightenment purists had driven off in favor of pure reason (Frankl 1960: 380). Commonly, literary theorists reduce the connection to the fact that, like *The Castle of Otranto*, many, but by no means all, early tales of terror are set in medieval locations, particularly castles, monasteries and charterhouses.

Jack Morgan's *The Biology of Terror* (2002) suggests an association based on the medieval period's alleged obsession in art with death and bodily putrefaction. Citing art historian T.S.R. Boase (1966), Morgan finds a "Gothic" link between the Romantic-era ghost story and the much earlier period's graphically morbid literature, such as the thirteenth-century poem "The Three Living and the Three Dead," in which living men encountered their decaying future corpses. Morgan's nightmarish depiction of pre-Renaissance culture ignores the fact that much art from the medieval period, particularly that prior to the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, takes as its subject-matter such life-affirming themes as beauty, redemption, courtly love and the establishment of heaven on earth, all themes in stark contrast to a notion of the Middle Ages as an epoch fixated upon violent imagery. Late in the medieval period, macabre subject matter, including the dance of death motif, certainly did increase, a phenomenon seen as a response to the heavy mortality rates from repeated outbreaks of plague, war and famine. However, medieval art on the whole does not dwell on death and violence, and early English Gothic revival architects, including Horace Walpole, hardly held *danses macabres* in mind in their fanciful evocations of the Middle Ages.

Nonetheless, in some ways Morgan has a point. "Gothic" at the time conjured up two contradictory scenarios: firstly, a dark age embroiled in a gruesome and superstitious culture, felicitously stamped out by progressive Enlightenment thinking, and

secondly, an age which, for some, was conceived as possessing a lost emotional richness and chivalrous tradition that they longed to rekindle. Walpole primarily summoned in his architectural experiments this noble medieval past, just as he reconfigured it in his fiction as an age of harrowing darkness. Paradoxically, then, it is in his literary work, not in his visually based architecture, that he began to establish the Gothic aesthetic as we recognize it today.

Linda Bayer-Berenbaum's art-historical study, *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art* (1982), asserts that the two principal "Gothics" – namely, pre-Renaissance art and the literature of horror and terror – share a coherent aesthetic and philosophic perspective centering on such qualities as restless energy, inquiry into the unknown and intertwining motifs. Bayer-Berenbaum's study is an admirable early attempt at establishing the terms for an ongoing, cross-historical Gothic aesthetic; however, her method illustrates a common methodological error, in which adjectives which can be applied to both visual and narrative-based manifestations of the mode – the "demonic," the "wild," the "imaginative" and the "excessive" – crystallize, despite their different implications and forms, into a forced set of easy equivalences. For example, elaborate, intertwining Teutonic motifs decorating medieval church capitals become equated with psychological complexity and the "sleepless, puzzled, tortured souls who populate the Gothic novel" (Bayer-Berenbaum 1982: 48). One senses that what is at work here is a kind of terminological sleight of hand, in which visual and formal qualities are manipulated through shared language to become thematic or emotional content, and vice versa, a problem that recurs in many interdisciplinary studies of the Gothic aesthetic.

Some critics have questioned whether the two principal significations of the term "Gothic" – medieval art and the eighteenth-century literature of terror – might, in fact, be entirely unrelated, a "convenience of designation" based on a sequence of misunderstandings and misuses perpetuated for centuries (Clery 2002: 21). We might turn our attention here to the perplexing overlap between these two meanings effected in the work of Horace Walpole, conventionally recognized as both the first author of the genre and the propertied architect/decorator of the prominent Gothic revival founding work, Strawberry Hill (1748–76).

Antiquarian-turned-architect-turned-novelist, Walpole was an amateur in all fields. His inventive "Gothic" architecture emphasized the late flamboyant English style which he characterized as spaces of "light, gaudiness & grandeur" contrasting with areas of "gloom" (Snodin 2009: 16). Walpole praised "the irregular lightness" of the style, along the lines of Nathan Bayley's noted 1736 description of the ancient style as "light, delicate, and rich to an extreme, full of whimsical and impertinent ornaments" (Snodin 2009: 55n7). "Light," "whimsical," and "delicate" are hardly terms with which we today associate the dark and foreboding "Gothic" architectural stereotype, the haunted house or labyrinthine castle, yet such cheerful adjectives abound in early eighteenth-century descriptions of the revived style. Liberally departing from authentic medieval sources, Walpole's suburban pleasure palace – although claimed as the partial backdrop for his terrifying story – was not meant to appear a dreary or frightening place to his pleasure-seeking guests, a sentiment that becomes immediately apparent as once is ushered into Strawberry Hill's recently restored, luminous, mirror-clad Gallery, richly adorned in gold and crimson. Indeed, the "Gothic vision" we have come to expect today is more closely realized in his

literary conjuring in *The Castle of Otranto* – with its “long labyrinth of darkness” and rays of “moonshine, streaming through a cranny of the ruin” – than in his bright three-dimensional architectural pastiche. The misty churchyards, ruins, wild landscapes and full moons of early Romantic poetry and prose provided some of the raw material for Walpole’s literary Gothic imagination, and were all but left out of his architectural experiments in Twickenham.

John Fletcher (1999) has usefully distinguished between two kinds of Gothic architecture at work in the eighteenth-century imagination. As Fletcher observes, the mostly ecclesiastical, medieval architecture of the Middle Ages was freely re-invented in the fiction of the period, and the pre-eminent typology of Gothic shifted from the light-filled cathedral to the darkened castle or ancestral home. During the eighteenth century, fantasy Gothic architecture was secularized in literature to produce suffocating, private spaces divorced from any actual architectural referent. As Gothic literary space grew more tortuous and mysterious, architecture purists such as A.W.N. Pugin began carefully measuring the medieval churches in a series of archaeologically driven studies. Where the past held for architects of the revived style a model for a future, better England, the literary genre was filled with problematic histories requiring resolution by its tortured protagonists, symbolically navigating inhospitable, ancient spaces. The bright neo-Gothic architectures that triumphed in civic and ecclesiastical building in England throughout the nineteenth century starkly contrast with the claustrophobic, private architectural visions fabricated in the literature, the latter chiefly contributing to what establishes today’s Gothic image.

Unlike the earlier generation of novelists that includes Walpole and William Beckford, author of *Vathek* and architect of the medievalist extravaganza Fonthill, a second generation of “Gothicists,” including Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, did not cross disciplinary boundaries by working in both fiction and revivalist architecture. The direct linkage in England between a literary-based and an architectural-based Gothic personified in the figures of Walpole and Beckford had begun to erode. In the writings of Radcliffe and Lewis, one notices the falling into place of the prevailing themes and recurring aesthetic characteristics of a new Gothic mode: darkness; shadowy outlines; labyrinthine and claustrophobic architectures; ancient furnishings exhibiting richly varied materials and textures; uneasy vantage points; mysterious lights and the like.

GOTHIC IN CONTEMPORARY ART: DEFINING A GOTHIC AESTHETIC

Art critics prior to the 1990s tended to be circumspect in setting forth direct aesthetic connections across disciplinary strands, maintaining primarily the term’s original art-historical meanings. In contrast, literary critics more liberally explored the “Gothicness” of artworks that seemed to be trafficking in analogous themes. In 1977, for instance, Ellen Moers extended her pioneering observations on “female gothic” texts into art, drawing, as she did so, a number of parallels between the fiction of Carson McCullers and the marginalized figures photographed in Diane Arbus’s work (Moers 1977: 109). Moers’s innovative analysis singled out those aspects of an artwork which offered the appearance of a consonant “Gothicness” in the subject matter, extracting the art from its wider context (for example, with Arbus,

removed from the history of documentary photography). Such literary-based infiltrations of “Gothic” made little headway into contemporary art discourse; such a usage of the term, fully divorced from the still-prevailing art-historical and medievalist connotations, remains surprisingly rare in art criticism until as late as the mid 1990s.

More recent art critics, such as Christoph Grunenberg in his *Gothic* exhibition and catalogue (1997), have refined the fluid methodologies of Moers and other critics, primarily through identifying a set of salient themes marking the literature (such as fear, family secrets, the abject and monstrosity) and finding their expression across a range of contemporary artworks. Such art is said to participate in a pan-disciplinary, late postmodernist trend of “gotica” observed in music, fashion and film, all allegedly in response to a millennial mood of doom and apprehension – later updated in a post-9/11, post-Columbine, post-Abu Ghraib, post-economic-apocalypse world. Although Grunenberg’s work remains the most thoughtful research on the subject thus far, his figuring of Gothic contemporary art via the assumption that the term, as a category of aesthetic description, is borrowed primarily from literature and, at its furthest extreme, eighteenth-century revivalism, somewhat overlooks the essential theme of the lingering effects of the past and our subjection to forces outside our control, one which vitally determines the Gothic aesthetic’s particular identity and purpose. This has emerged as the key cross-disciplinary thematic of Gothic, powerfully at work even in the high-modernist writings of art critic Clement Greenberg, who despised all things Gothic as representative of a despicable throwback to the past.

Equally overlooked, and of even greater importance, is that for a number of influential literary theorists of the genre since the 1980s, terror literature is not only signaled by a set of ominous themes but is also greatly reliant on a concatenation of visual signals. Aesthetic qualities are briefly addressed in Grunenberg’s work (fragmentation, subverted notions of beauty, dramatic lighting), yet without much reference to the vast body of literary criticism which has catalogued the genre’s recurring visual triggers. Visual and material terms signaling “Gothic” within literary analysis include the emphasis on surface and texture (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* [1980]); the literalization of idea into form (Margaret Homans in *Bearing the Word* [1989]); claustrophobic space and disintegration, signaling a history of unhappy relations with the past (Chris Baldick’s influential “Introduction” [1992]); the voyeuristic and theatrical framing of a scene often belonging to a specifically female position as an outsider (Susan Wolstenholme’s *Gothic (Re)Visions* [1993]); the deliberate insistence on viewing the physical “body-in-pain” (Steven Bruhm’s *Gothic Bodies* [1994]); the subtle but consistent uses of skin to signal monstrosity (Judith Halberstam’s *Skin Shows* [1995]); and the blurring of forms to suggest undecided material and ontological states (Fred Botting’s *Gothic* [1996]). Such a set of formal qualities might well form the basis of a coherent aesthetic rehearsed in Enlightenment-era literature, and one which we can now recognize in the visual art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as “Gothic.”

These key visually-based characteristics conjured up in the literature do not merely accompany the genre’s abiding themes, but are central to signaling its presence. Of course, no work includes every marker, and the best examples are often able to invent new ones; certainly, the production of a Gothic vision should not be reduced to a box-ticking exercise. Yet this flexible cluster of visual traits, combined with a

narrative-based and often dramatic context recounting a set of oppressive conditions usually inherited from the past, uniquely distinguish the Gothic from its broadly affiliated visual categories, among them the sublime, the picturesque and the Romantic. Other related terms, such as the fantastic, the uncanny and the abject, do not carry the same distinctive material vision – one that is, in some ways, reworked within the thriving subcultural and *haute couture* goth style of dress. For, despite the many stylistic variations and changing fashions of goth dressing, this style almost always places strong emphasis not only on darkness (the color black) but on surface, variety and texture (satin, rubber, lace, metal, latex, ribbon, veils) while drawing attention to skin (naked flesh, pallor, tattoos, piercings, ripped clothing). Many of goth's iconic signs are also the formal characteristics of the literary Gothic.

Elements marking the genre's aesthetic – extreme attention to varying surfaces and skin; claustrophobic space; darkness; blurring and disintegration; literalization of symbolic states into material realities; voyeuristic viewing conditions – evoked in the literary settings and scenarios are pressed into service to convey the effects of unwanted conditions oppressing the present; this combination provides the defining thematic and formal qualities of a Gothic aesthetic. And it is such a definition that allows finally for the recuperation of Fuseli's painting as a Gothic vision. *The Nightmare* is presented voyeuristically, as if taking place in a kind of forbidden stage-set. Here, a semi-conscious young woman is plainly exposed to uncontrolled and dangerous, animalistic forces; our sense of her vulnerability is heightened by her luminous pale skin, barely concealed behind a veil-like nightdress. In this depthless space, partially blurred figures disappear into dark shadow, such as the real/unreal horse which charges toward us in terror, as if propelled by some unseen force. An unprecedented kind of imaginary space – claustrophobic, shadowy, both unreal and real – harbors creatures that seem to inhabit a state between dream and wakefulness, life and death. In *The Nightmare*, the sleeping girl seems to share our “real” time, surrounded by fantasy demons swirling about her and occupying instead a dream time. We might recall here that Walpole alleged that (like Shelley's “vision” of her Creature) the source behind *Otranto* was a dream: a non-rational mental picture which follows its own spatial and narrative logic.

Some artists of the age, Goya and Fuseli among them, can be seen as attempting to represent in visual terms this unstable, haunted space which today might rightly assume the name Gothic. This is not the conventional view of Enlightenment-era space, as Andreas Huyssen writes, said to be energized by utopian ideals, multi-perspectivalism, montage, and fragment, later formalized in the high modernist style and vision, but by some other more confusing arrangement, indefinable both in time and space (Huyssen 2010: 22). This fictional, hard-to-define location, where modern man (or woman) is subjected to fears and forces over which he or she has no control – represented in both Fuseli's nightmare and Goya's *sueño* – can today be termed as Gothic space: elaborated in the literature of terror and taking shape in visual media at the dawn of the modern age.

WARHOL'S *ELECTRIC CHAIR*: A GOTHIC READING

Among the many attempts to define Gothic literature in some definitive and broadly usable manner, Chris Baldick's contribution in his 1992 “Introduction” to *The*

Oxford Book of Gothic Tales is considered by many to be uniquely valid and resilient. The Gothic, he writes, “should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce a sickening descent into disintegration” (Baldick 1992: xiii). Baldick is at pains to distance himself from the checklists of standard tropes and characters said to mark the Gothic mode. Instead, he directs his attention to its sensual effects – a suffocating depiction of interior space (“a claustrophobic sense of enclosure”) and a resulting aesthetic and emotional effect (“sickening descent into disintegration”) – to signal the Gothic’s principal theme: an acute awareness of history (“inheritance in time”). Can these defining qualities of the literature – history, claustrophobia, and disintegration – be applied to modern and contemporary visual art in identifying a Gothic vision? With Baldick’s definition in mind, I will offer a Gothic reading of Andy Warhol’s *Electric Chair*, a silkscreened painting usually, and perhaps inadequately, framed solely within the antithetically bright and shiny vision of Pop art.

Warhol’s *Electric Chair* (1964) is a rare example of an interior within the American artist’s vast oeuvre, an oeuvre characterized, for the most part, by reworkings of the genres of portraiture and still life; thus, we immediately note that to “speak” of death – here and in other artworks comprising his *Death and Disaster* series

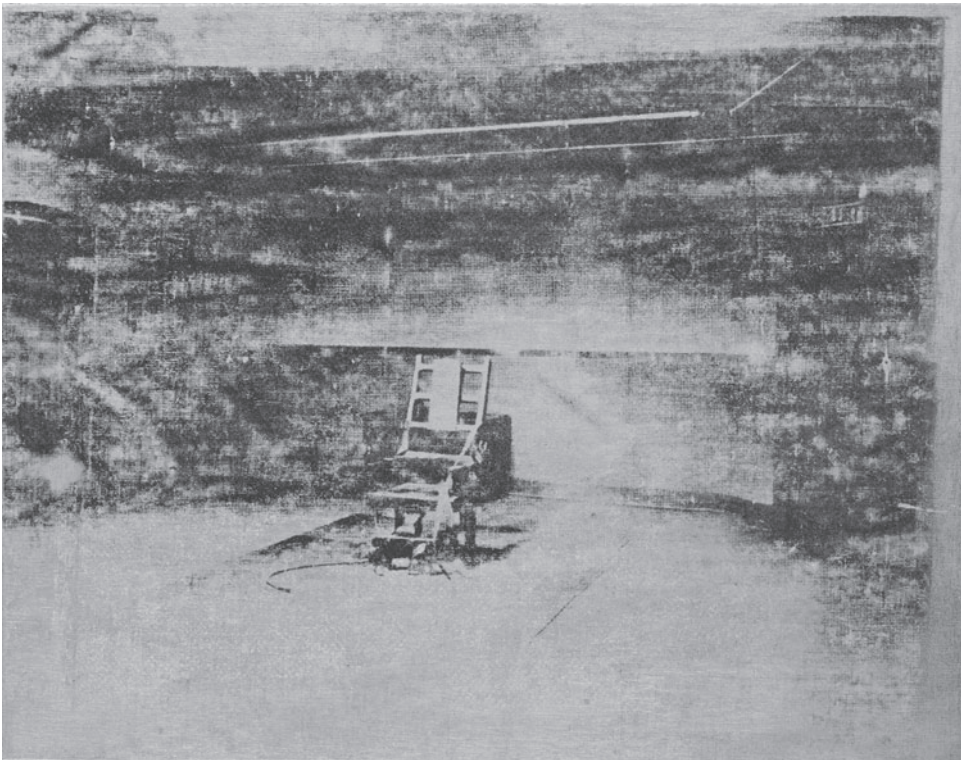


Figure 35.3 Andy Warhol, *Electric Chair* (1964)

(1963–64) – Warhol somewhat uncharacteristically chose and made use of claustrophobic imagery. The viewer’s gaze is perpetually slammed against the blank back and side walls of this windowless, institutional architecture of this death chamber. In the *Electric Chair*, the state’s control over the body is imprinted everywhere, from the shackles on the armrests of the chair to the sign demanding SILENCE hanging over the door. In *Electric Chair*, everyone – whether the absent, doomed body expected in the chair, or the implied bodies called to witness its gruesome destruction – is subjected to the commands of a death-delivering institution.

In Baldick’s terms, we might find suggested the inheritance of America’s barbarous and racially skewed dedication to the death penalty, as well as the disintegration of society in both the presumed extreme severity of the crime committed (history) and the irrevocable finality of the punishment applied (disintegration). In other words, the unusual choice of a closed space comprising the ominously empty chair might be said to convey what Baldick describes as “a fearful sense of inheritance in time” and “a sickening descent into disintegration.” We might also consider here Mary Shelley’s use of electricity to mark the passage between life and death in *Frankenstein* (1818), analogous in some senses to *Electric Chair*’s connotations of technologically assisted death. In representing the subjection to forces beyond one’s control, in this case an institutionally sanctioned murder, Warhol seems to rework to great effect the Gothic visual language that I am defining here.

As an aesthetic, the Gothic might be understood as the extreme, almost caricaturish Other to the modernism of a Clement Greenberg or Theodor Adorno. The Gothic’s insistent obscurity contrasts to an extreme and literal degree with the intellectual illumination of the Enlightenment and, later, the transparency of modernism, both said to point toward a new and better future, one that is completely untethered to the past. The Gothic tends to be dark and suffocating while the modernist style cuts wall-sized openings for light and air to pour inside, illuminating any lingering shadows – a point vividly made in Anthony Vidler’s *The Architectural Uncanny* (1992). The Gothic refuses any of modernism’s historic or existential autonomy: hidden somewhere in its chronic darkness is the uncontrollable force that prevents us from moving forward. This Gothic vision presents a dark picture of haunted, insalubrious and unresolved circumstances, situations that remain thoroughly at odds with optimistic or forward-looking cultural frameworks. The Gothic is inclined toward broad communicability through highly engrossing stories, not abstract idealizations aimed at an initiated few implied in Greenberg and Adorno’s anti-mass-cultural writings.

The Gothic blurs its characters and events to literalize “instability,” while the hard edges of painterly and architectural works by such modernist stalwarts as Mondrian or Mies van der Rohe are stark and distinct. The Gothic surface is textured, seething with its unhealthy history, while the modernist surface is sleek and polished, non-absorbent and wipe-clean, bearing no trace of the past. The Gothic relies on narrative to communicate the particular haunting underway, loading materials with traces of that meaning; the ideal Greenbergian artwork exists in a state of objecthood, unfettered by any reference beyond its own medium-specificity and experimentation. In sum, the hallmarks of the Gothic aesthetic within modern and contemporary art tend perpetually to run counter to a modernist ideal. Some

mid-to-late twentieth-century artists, Warhol and Bourgeois among them, can be seen as adopting a Gothic aesthetic partially in a bid to shift away from high modernist art-making dogma. However, in observing this Gothic/modernist polarity, we should bear in mind that both visions are products of the Enlightenment era, and Gothic and modernist visual art should be seen as operating dialectically as cultural companions, not as mutually exclusive forces.

In his 1963 essay “Language to Infinity,” Michel Foucault discussed the sensationalist qualities of terror literature as attempting to create a sensuous-material experience which transcended the limited experience of reading. For Foucault, the terror genre invented a form that denied its own textuality to generate unmediated sensations, producing “thrills, stupefaction, ecstasy, dumbness” presumed capable of stretching beyond language itself (Foucault 1977: 60–61). Whether in Foucault’s analysis, or in the work of Gothic literary criticism briefly addressed above, the genre’s defining stylistic traits always verge toward an extra-linguistic dimension. In the literature’s elaborate, innovative, haunted visions we recognize the precise collection of visual signs invented to picture the flickering mental space of ongoing modern malaise: the Gothic aesthetic experience.

REFERENCES

- Baldick, C. (1992) *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bayer-Berenbaum, L. (1982) *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*, Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press.
- Clery, E.J. (2002) “The Genesis of ‘Gothic’ Fiction,” in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21–32.
- Fletcher, J. (1999) *Romanticism and Postmodernism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977) “Language to Infinity,” 1963, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. D.F. Bouchard, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 53–67.
- Frankl, P. (1960) *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Grunenberg, C. (1997) *Gothic*, Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Huyssen, A. (2010) *Ruins of Modernity*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Moers, E. (1977) *Literary Women*, London: The Women’s Press.
- Morgan, J. (2002) *The Biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Myrone, M. (2006) *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination*, London: Tate.
- Snodin, M. (2009) *Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stafford, B.M. (1985) “From ‘Brilliant Ideas’ to ‘Fitful Thoughts’: Conjecturing the Unseen in Late Eighteenth-Century Art,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 48.3: 329–64.
- Ward, M.C. (2000) “A Painting of the Unspeakable: Henry Fuseli’s *The Nightmare* and the Creation of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 33.1: 20–31.

FURTHER READING

- Clark, T.J. (1999) "The Unhappy Consciousness," *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, Princeton: Yale University Press. (A discussion of Greenberg's aversion to the Gothic.)
- LaBelle, C. (2003) "I See a Darkness . . . Blum & Poe, Los Angeles," *frieze* 76: 116. (An example of a derisory response to the notion of "Gothic" contemporary art.)
- Trachtenberg, M. (2000) "Suger's Miracles, Branner's Bourges: Reflections on 'Gothic Architecture' as Medieval Modernism," *Gesta* 39.2: 183–205. (On the proposed term "Medieval Modernism" to replace "Gothic Architecture.")

This page intentionally left blank

PART V

CONTEMPORARY IMPULSES



This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

SONIC GOTHIC



Isabella van Elferen

“möcht’ auch noch die ganze Welt uns hören”
“Der Wolfsmantel” (Confessions d’un Voleur D’Ames 2007)

The Gothic world resonates with sound and music. A Gothic novel without mysterious sounds ringing through the night is hard to imagine, horror film would not be the same without a terrifying soundtrack, and the goth subculture celebrates music as the dark spring of a lifestyle (Hodkinson 2002: 35–38). Despite their evident prominence in the genre, the sonic characteristics of Gothic have remained obscured in academic research. Defining sonic Gothic through the functions that sound and music have within the genre, this chapter explores the ways in which sound and music represent auditory counterparts to the spectrality, hauntology, hauntography and transgression of the Gothic.

SPECTRALITY

The first dimension of sonic Gothic is its functioning as a metaphorical device in the genre’s construction of spectrality. Ghosts are eminently audible in Gothic, often perceivable by ear before they can be seen by the eye and long before they can be captured by reason. This becomes clear, for instance, in the first pages of China Miéville’s *King Rat* (1998), a Gothic tale situated in London’s urban labyrinth and its dark doppelgänger, the underworld of the sewers. This smelly, humid, echoing heterotopia is the domain reign of King Rat, a furtive creature who is half-man and half-rodent. The book’s narrator, Saul, first discerns the King through disembodied, strangely empty sounds, a “sonic vampirism” (Miéville 1998: 27) that seems to blanket out natural noise and, by way of his ears, open his mind to the possibility of preter- or supernatural beings. By describing King Rat’s entrée into the tale in this way, Miéville places himself directly in the Gothic tradition of hollow footsteps, disembodied whispers and echoing melodies. Very similar announcements of supernatural terror can be found in Gothic novels, from the rustling and breathing in the labyrinths beneath the castle of Otranto (Walpole 1968: 61–62) to the distantly close growls in *House of Leaves* (Danielewski 2001: 26, 46, 127, 320). The obtrusive

uncanniness of these Gothic sounds is caused by their seeming lack of physical origin. Upon the sound of approaching footsteps we look around us, seeking visual confirmation of the presence suggested by those sounds. If that confirmation cannot be given, a fundamental physical law seems thwarted. Who or what makes these sounds when they have no discernible source? Was it a figment of the imagination, or – and here Gothic terror sets in – is it some disembodied entity, a ghost or a demon?

The Gothic trope of disembodied sound is made explicit in the *X-Files* (Carter 1993–2002) episode, “How the ghosts stole Christmas” (1998), in which FBI agents Mulder and Scully investigate a purportedly haunted house. Inside it they hear the full range of ghostly noises – thumping footsteps, a chiming clock, howling wind, thunder and lightning – and then they see a ghost. Scully, ever representative of the voice of reason, assures Mulder that their visual perception was merely manipulated by their hearing: “When we hear a sound, we get a chill; we see a shadow and allow ourselves to imagine something that an otherwise rational person would discount out of hand.” What she says, really, is that sound, like shadow, can seem to indicate ghostliness because we assume it comes from somewhere, even if that origin is invisible: sound without source suggests spectrality. Sonic Gothic exploits sound’s ambivalent relation with embodiment, pushing the uncanny implications of this relation to their limits.

If a sound’s source is physically removed, moreover, that sound is, itself, also temporally removed. Sound waves can only logically be heard for a certain amount of time after their initial utterance, as acoustic reverberation is determined as much by the distance that sound waves travel as by the amount of time it takes for them to fade out. As well as by the presence of disembodied entities, therefore, the spectrality of sound without apparent physical source can be caused by the supernatural lingering of echo after physical sound waves have faded away. In this way, disembodied sound renders audible the temporal dislodgement that is inherent to spectrality: it unlocks present sound from past origin, leaving that origin unheard, unsignified, non-existent. For those who have ears to hear, Derrida articulates the time of specters in un-echoing reverberations: “time is *disarticulated*, dislocated, dislodged, time is run down, on the run and run down, *deranged*, both out of order and mad. Time is off its hinges, time is off course, besides itself, disadjusted” (Derrida 2006: 20). A ghostly voice in a Gothic tale may thus not only prompt the question as to “who or what made that sound?” but also “when was that sound sounded?”

Signifying the acoustic impossibility of non-physical and un-temporal sound, spectral sound invariably causes the projection of the listener’s innermost fears onto its imagined origin. When physical laws do not apply, the lack that they leave is readily filled by projections fed by the “defence mechanisms” of fear and fantasy (Botting 1999: 32): this sound cannot rationally be real; therefore, my fear dictates that it must be a specter. In the un-familiar shape of ghosts, Gothic spectrality fends off other explanations for obscure phenomena. The return of some repressed is a far more comprehensible cause of such mysteries than unthinkable possibilities like the “un-blackness” of non-meaning (Botting 1999: 31–33) or, possibly even worse, the “abyss of not-Being” (Heidegger 2000: 116). In Miéville’s novel, meeting King Rat terrifies Saul as this preternatural creature is neither rat nor man yet simultaneously both at once, centuries old yet ageless, spectrally silent yet clearly audible, and able

to “hear the things left unsaid” (Miéville 1998: 34). King Rat’s impossibility allows the disclosure of Things that should have remained hidden, and that are now sheltered under the rat-man’s spectral-yet-smelly overcoat: “If you can be what you are, what’s London? . . . What are the boundaries of the world?” (Miéville 1998: 61). Offering an auditory dimension to the “production of the unconscious” through Gothic spectrality (Botting 1999), the ghostly functionality of sonic Gothic is an important part of the fictional strategy of the genre. It questions the building-blocks of reality, dismantling with the physical laws of acoustics the symbolic order of the world and replacing it with another, in which the disembodied presence of a dark Other can reveal itself through spectral sound.

In goth music, sonic spectrality is represented in a number of ways. Song lyrics may literally voice Gothic ghosts, so that listeners perceive the voice of repressed anxieties. Nick Cave’s 1996 CD *Murder Ballads*, for instance, featured several tracks expressing the thoughts of murderers, rapists and ghosts, all of which lent the album a distinctly uncanny mood. Other goth lyrics are written from the perspective of a character in a Gothic story: for example, Siouxsie and the Banshees’ “Premature Burial” (from *Join Hands* 1979) is based on Edgar Allan Poe’s story of that name. Such textual ghostliness is musically underlined most noticeably by tone color and postproduction. Goth favors either effervescent timbres, such as the flageolet strings and airy voices like that of Robert Smith, or, contrastingly, impressive classical timbres in orchestras and vocals: famous examples are the fleeting soprano of Within Temptation’s Sharon den Adel and the booming bass of HIM’s Ville Valo. Goth postproduction is excessively fond of reverb, so that tracks often sound as if they have been recorded in large spaces like cathedrals or empty industrial buildings. Bauhaus’s “Bela Lugosi’s Dead” (1979), of course, is one of the classics.

Some goth acts explore the spectrality inherent to the genre’s fictional strategy, describing the ways in which language and metaphor can produce ghostliness. “Der Wolfsmantel” (“The Wolf’s Cloak,” from *Confessions d’un Voleur D’Ames* 2007) by Luxembourg act ROME can be analyzed from this perspective. The song warns of the power of words and their capacity to invade listeners through the defenses of fear and fantasy. Ultimately, words do not just deceive: they are “greedy little men,” a “blind mob” eager to take listeners into the void beyond their own symbolic universe.

Beware of words and their power to charm
Those greedy little men, their filthy souls
Before all else be armed
“. . . möcht’ auch noch die ganze Welt uns hören. . . .”

Every musical parameter of the composition is geared toward the grimness of this warning against the spectral power of words. The admonition is vocalized by singer Jérôme Reuter’s deep voice hovering in minimal melodic movement. This vocal near-motionlessness is confirmed by the harmonic outline of the track. The verses consist of two repeating chords only: the G minor chord that gloomily determines the key of the track, and F major which – lacking the required leading tone F sharp – emphasizes the minor harmony of this song. The chorus briefly moves up to the secondary dominant C minor, but then returns to G, surrendering to the endlessness

of this song's repetitions. The tempo is moderate. Drum rolls mark the first note of each bar, the military precision of their beats patiently but ominously underlining the relentless passing of time. With every bar, every second, the specters evoked by words creep closer.

Each verse and chorus ends with a sampled voice speaking the German words "*Möcht' auch noch die ganze Welt uns hören*" ("Even if the entire world would hear us"). The crackly sound of the microphone – radio? telephone? – resembles that of old recordings, so that this voice does not only seem to come from a foreign country, but from another space and time altogether. The sample is provided with ample reverb, which adds to the suggestion of spatio-temporal dislodgement. With the repeated drum rolls, this sonically construed spectrality evokes a past anxiety recognizable to any listener: that regarding Germany's twentieth-century military history. The spectralizing effect is enhanced by the bridge section in the track, in which the German recording continues but remains just out of earshot: after an initial "*Es ist so viel passiert*" ("So much has happened") the words fade out into an estranging background murmur. While military trumpets redouble the connotations of the drum rolls, a faint rhythmical screaming is audible which makes way for an operatic female voice in the last verse and chorus. Layer upon layer of voices are audible, and with that the layeredness of space and of time perspire.

The track stops suddenly, the F chord making closure impossible. The listener is left with questions: Whose voices did I hear? From where and when did they come? Which "us" might the whole world hear and how? A poignant form of sonic spectrality, "*Der Wolfsmantel*" surpasses the acoustic logic of space and time. Through the lack left by the track's non-space, non-time and non-voice, the one haunting question resonates: what is the listener warned of, if words are apparently misleading? Just like other forms of Gothic writing, this song produces fear and fantasy as a frantic projection covering the void beyond words. If, as Botting maintains, "the labyrinth of fiction offers no other ground, no ultimate reality, no depth and no origin" (Botting 1999: 32), the musical version of that labyrinth makes its emptiness audible, perpetual echoes ringing through an abyss of unimaginable size and time.

HAUNTOLOGY

The second dimension of sonic Gothic is its unveiling of the haunted void beyond spectrality. Following through what he called the "deconstructive logic" of the spectral, Derrida has pointed out that the ghosts of meaning are present in every utterance and every present (Derrida and Stiegler 2008: 117). This spectral widening of the principles of intertextuality has led to the observation that haunting is part of the "very construction . . . of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time" (Derrida 2006: 202). He coins the neologism "hauntology," a notion acknowledging the observation that even Heideggerian ontology is thus always-already haunted (Derrida 2006: 202). Offering a critical embedding for Gothic spectrality and haunting, Derrida's ideas have broad resonance in the field of Gothic studies. Hauntology is at the core of Gothic performativity, as the genre's labyrinthine fictionality painstakingly unearths the fears and fantasies of its audience. Behind the repressed anxiety projected onto its facade, each ghost signifies

the more profound uncanniness of haunted ontology: the possibility that there is no meaning, no being-in-time.

Gothic's sonic performativity, too, is hauntological. Like any other utterance, musical expression is haunted by the ghosts of meaning: revenants of the past that are conjured into the present by each new listening experience. On at least three levels, listening to music is a form of hearing the always-already of spectrality: music evokes concrete memories of former listening experiences; it stirs emotional responses by way of affective connotations; and it lets traces of familiarity surface in melodies, timbres, or rhythms. Music's medium-specific hauntedness is arguably one of the reasons why musical experience is often assessed in a certain mystifying manner: what we love in music is precisely the fact that it can remind us of moments long forgotten, substantially change our mood or facilitate our imagining of worlds beyond our own.

Unsurprisingly, music's inherent hauntology often plays a role in Gothic's explorations of spectrality and hauntedness. Gothic cinema and television exploit music by letting soundtracks form a commentary on visual plots. As a disembodied voice, nondiegetic music (heard only by the film audience as opposed to diegetic music which originates in the film world) is a spectral presence in film or TV narratives; moreover, this ghostly voice can provide a hauntological layer of musical memories and connotations that may intensify or warp the audience's perception of the screened events (see Donnelly 2005: 19–35). The *X-Files* Christmas episode previously discussed starts with the sound of a church organ and is accompanied by a harpsichord, instruments that are invariably used to evoke an uncanny mood in horror and Gothic cinema (Brown 2010). Partly because of the abundant use of J.S. Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* in horror cinema and television – starting with Boris Karloff's performance in Edgar G. Ulmer's *The Black Cat* (1934) – the timbre of the organ itself is able to serve as a musical messenger of the uncanny in this *X-Files* episode (van Elferen 2013). Similarly the Gothic connotations of the harpsichord timbre are so strong in the popular imagination that they almost automatically make on-screen events appear uncanny: *The X-Files* here draws inspiration from the harpsichord-playing butler Lurch in MGM's *The Addams Family* (Addams 1964–66) and the vampires in *The Hunger* (Scott 1983) and *Interview with the Vampire* (Jordan 1994). The hauntology of musical connotations can thus gothicize visual narratives, even if the music in question, like Bach's organ pieces, had nothing to do with Gothic originally. This illustrates the point that the definition of Gothic music does not rely on stylistic characteristics, but on functionality and context.

Besides these spectral types of musical intertextuality, musical hauntology also offers a sonic version of the “no ground” at the bottom of the labyrinth of Gothic fiction (Botting 1999), the void of non-meaning over which hauntology is only a thin veil. Music in and of itself does not signify anything, and musical meaning originates only through the inscription process of listening. The hauntological labyrinth of musical experience has no foundation. Thus, if Derrida argues, “ontology opposes [hauntology] only in a movement of exorcism,” musical meaning, by the same token, is a “conjunction” (Derrida 2006: 202). Lawrence Kramer argues that music is “about revisitation, about the experience . . . of the uncanny” (Kramer 2002: 259): the origins of musical reminiscence, connotations and affects must always remain hidden, un-black. Doubtless, this aspect of musical hauntology is another cause for

the mystifying assessments of musical experience in popular discourses. Because musical meaning has no origin, its effect on listeners' moods is difficult to put into words, and the lack of meaning is easily filled by the mythologies of desire. But musical haunting is as prosaic as it is mystical. Music haunts simply because it signifies nothing at all and so many things at the same time. The listener is haunted by hauntology itself.

Music is a key metaphor in Miéville's *King Rat*. The book revolves around jungle, the soundtrack of London's underground. Like other dance genres, jungle thrives on musical hauntology: DJ-ing is the art of cutting, distorting, pasting and retracking musical memories (Miller 2004). Natasha, one of rat-son Saul's best friends, is a jungle DJ whose tracks are intricate blends of "pickled sounds" (Miéville 1998: 67): sampled snippets, passing references and vague musical memories blended into a new sonic realm of space and time. Her music does not only quote sounds, it also mixes experiences, blending pasts with presents into danceable futures. Natasha's track, *Wind City*, uses a piano loop that connotes worlds of meaning from swing-beat to Ibiza house; mixed into the track the piano is decontextualized into "an instrument that signalled the destruction of anything human in this world. Deeply plaintive and melancholy, but ghostly. The piano tried to *remember* melancholia, and presented it as if for approval. Is this it? Is this sadness? it asked" (Miéville 1998: 270–71). The explicit implicitness of this passage portrays in words the non-origin of musical meaning, the groundless void of musical hauntology remaining verbally veiled by meanings that can never be attained. Natasha's bass line, which consists of radio static that "could have been voices, eager to make contact, and failing" (Miéville 1998: 272), underlines Miéville's strategy of fictional un-expression as it turns the spectrality of recorded sound into the hauntology of musical signification.

HAUNTOGRAPHY

The third dimension of sonic Gothic is its auditory "writing of excess" (Botting 1996: 1). Like any type of Gothic writing, Gothic music emphatically empties out its own surface. Gothic foregrounds itself as a careful mixture of over-referentiality and non-referentiality, an im-precise convergence of worn-out formulas painting ruined castles and implicit hints at hidden terrors. Through its balancing of minute detail and vague hintings Gothic discloses the thin lines between the two types of signification, thereby revealing the abyss that is hauntology. This unveiling of hauntology through the spilling over of mediation is hauntography: the media that voice Gothic narration are hauntographical agents, active mediators of the always-already (van Elferen 2012a: 15–17).

The emptying out of sonic signification through over-referentiality is, again, evident in the *X-Files* Christmas episode. At the start of the episode the spooky connotations of the church organ and the shot of a dark Gothic mansion make it immediately clear to television audiences that they are watching a Gothic show. The overlay of the organ by the cheesy tune of "Have yourself a merry little Christmas" adds a touch of Gothic self-irony to the soundscape. As if to preempt the misunderstanding of some imaginary viewer, Scully helpfully diagnoses the situation for them. "I see. The dark Gothic manor, the omnipresent low fog hugging the thicket of

overgrowth . . . Wait. Is that a hound I hear baying out on the moors?” Her comment is hauntographical: Gothic is over-formulaic, its eerie imagery and its spooky sounds so over-explicit that they evacuate themselves. “It was a time of dark, dark despair,” Mulder remarks. The rhetorical hyperbole of this phrase is accompanied appropriately by slow parallel violin movements in minor key and the bells of the celeste, the instrument that Danny Elfman has used so often in his film soundtracks – such as the soundtrack for *Edward Scissorhands* (Burton 1990) – that it has become a sonic signifier of Gothic fantasy in its own right. “You said that,” replies Scully, commenting again on the repetitiveness of Gothic hauntography, compounding the spooky signifiers until they do not mean anything anymore. In excess of themselves, however, these signifiers leave an emptiness that is more uncanny than any ghost story could ever be. Mulder and Scully go into the house, and find themselves utterly terrified precisely because what Scully calls the “ingrained clichés from a thousand different horror films” have been discounted, and do not mean anything. But when all meaning is gone, what is left is a void, an abyss that cannot but expose our own repressions.

The track “Violin” (*The Mirror* 2008) by San Francisco-based band Soil & Eclipse embodies all the “ingrained clichés” of the goth writing of excess. The song lyrics consist of fragments of the thirteenth century “*Dies Irae*” (“Day of Wrath”) sequence from the Gregorian plainchant mass. Like Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* (1935), the “*Dies Irae*” sequence is a standard trope in horror film soundtracks, where its gloomy Latin text sung in unison never fails to overlay visual narratives with eerie connotations. As precise as the Latin words and their place in the Catholic liturgy may be, those connotations acquire their uncanniness from their imprecision: overuse has rendered the Romantic fantasy of funerary plainchant sung in dark medieval churches worn and even more hazy than it already was. The “*Dies Irae*” sequence has thus become a hauntographical trope that discloses the conflation of referential detail and evasion in hauntology. In view of the background of this citation, singer Jay Tye’s blatant mispronunciations of the Latin words in “Violin” – “fyootoorroos” for “futurus” and “deessersoorroos” for “discussurus,” for instance – become somewhat of a hauntographical giveaway, comparable to the plasticky feel of fake fangs. This effect is enhanced by the words’ musical context in this track. The vocal lines are doubled by the grand timbre of a choir: as noted above, this timbre in itself is a cliché of goth spectrality, and the fact that this “choir” consists of Tye’s own, multiply dubbed voice, creates the impression of a group of musical doppelgängers desperately flaunting their intended spookiness.

These musical over-signifiers are juxtaposed with the violin that names the track. Entering the musical texture with a brief melodic cadence to D minor in a break in the beat, it adds a layer of wordless Romanticism to the collision of temporalities in the song. The plainchant text, the EBM (electronic body music) drum machine and the timbre of Tye’s voice with its echoes of 1980s synthpop bands like Depeche Mode and Erasure each evoke their own historical fantasy, and the un-temporality of their convergence is emphasized by the unspoken nineteenth-century bravura of this instrumental part. The track ends with a brief violin solo resonating through a seemingly large space, each of the over-determined temporalities of goth spilling over into an endlessly echoing void beyond chronology.

In *King Rat* the Gothic blend over- and under-referentiality leads to another type of excess. Miéville describes the music in the book in minute detail:

Across the top of the mellifluous and pointillist flute lines that seduced the dancers and the spiders, a third level of sound sprang into being. An unsettling, crawling democracy of semitones and minor chords, pauses punctuated by surreal bursts of noise, music to make the skin crawl. Rat-music.

(Miéville 1998: 393)

The passage may read as overly specific, but the music described here has the ephemeral quality of a phantom. Many readers are not familiar with the musical jargon, so that these words, untranslatable into sonic imagination, remain just words. Those readers that are familiar with it, on the other hand, could infinitely imagine concrete pieces of music to match this description. The semitones and minor chords could indicate a range of compositions from Carlo Gesualdo's Renaissance madrigals to J.S. Bach's "Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue" (c. 1720s) to Arnold Schönberg's expressionist "Transfigured Night" [1899], but no dance music matches this sound sketch. This im-precise harmonic outline is to be overlaid with a Debussy-esque flute (the "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" [1894] seems to be the inspiration), creating a blend of musics that is hard to imagine. Miéville's "rat-music" takes the virtuality of literary sound to its limits: it is unheard as well as inaudible, and therefore all the more easily subject to the projections of fear and fantasy. This *sfumato* of over-determined prose and under-determined sound evacuates the mind's ear. It conjures up a silent movie with music that is clearly very powerful, but whose actualization can only exist within the confines of anxious imagination.

The X-Files's explicitly spooky soundtrack, *Soil & Eclipse*'s clichéd markers of gothness, and the evasive music of *King Rat*'s virtual Piper dissolve their own referentiality, functioning as hauntographical indications of the void beneath the facade of signification. The hauntographical dimension of Gothic music exposes the void of our most beautiful musical dream or our worst musical nightmare. Which ghosts are released when the surface evaporates?

LITURGY

The fourth dimension of sonic Gothic music is its ability to let audiences participate in the genre's transgressions. Gothic literature, cinema and television portray boundary crossings: from the land of the living to the realm of the dead, from the present to the past or into the future, from reality to fantasy, dream or phantasmagoria. Sound and music play an interesting role in these transgressions. While textual and visual media portray border crossings in a linear way – passing from one side to another – it is possible in sonic media to make the two sides of a boundary audible at the same time. In Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931), for instance, Jekyll's becoming-monstrous is filmed linearly, but sonically established through simultaneity. Mamoulian recorded the sound of actor Fredric March's heartbeat and let that accompany the metamorphosis throughout (Lerner 2010: 67–68). When Jekyll passes out, circular camera movements suggest that the room starts to spin. This visual linearity is paired by sonic layeredness: a high-pitched

metallic sound overlays the heartbeat indicating that the human is becoming invaded by the monstrous-technological. After a succession of shots in which Jekyll's appearance is ever more beastly, the metallic sounds and the heartbeats give way to silence: the camera turns to the mirror and the scientist sees himself as Hyde.

Moreover, listener immersion in the mnemonic and affective vectors of musical hauntology can enhance immersion in Gothic's boundary crossings. In a key scene in *The Black Cat*, one of Karloff's helpers accompanies an occult ritual taking place in a dark basement by playing J.S. Bach on an organ. The immersion caused by the hauntology of the organ timbre and of Bach's compositorial style is here given a visceral, participatory dimension by the ritual setting of the scene. Ritual is the creation of a performative twilight zone in which the sacred and secular spill over into each other; as this type of expenditure is at the heart of Gothic, rituals and rituality are frequent themes in the genre. As liturgy, music is essential for all types of rituality, accompanying its ceremonial performance and reinforcing its working. Liturgical music is designed to endorse transcendence from the here and now to an unknown, often metaphysical, then and there. In Gothic this liturgical capacity of music is employed to immerse audiences in the border crossings that the genre describes.

The Gothic use of music's transgressive potential becomes most evident in goth nightlife (van Elferen 2012b). Through its elaborate ceremonies of dress codes and absinthe rituals, goth club nights present tangible versions of Gothic twilight zones. While visitors' costumes make spectrality wearable, and absinthe and clove cigarettes allow Gothic sensations to enter the body, the visceral pounding of the basses invites dancers physically to inhabit the nocturnal world of goth. Like other forms of dance *jouissance*, goth club life offers its participants a temporary reality borne from musical immersion and the "liminal experience" of dancing (Gilbert and Pearson 1999: 60–68). Goth dance completes the corporeal trajectory across Gothic boundaries: dialoguing corporeally with ROME's, Soil & Eclipse's, Cave's, Siouxsie's or other goth music, goths partake in the universes that these artists create through their musical exploration of Gothic spectrality, hauntology and hauntography. In its ceremonial design and transcendent musicality, goth nightlife shows kinship to Dionysian rites. Nietzsche describes the music-induced ecstasy of Dionysian ritual in terms that would not be out of place on a goth party invitation:

In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak; he is about to take a dancing flight into the air . . . He feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like to the gods whom he saw walking in his dreams.

(Nietzsche 1995: 4)

In this context it is no coincidence that a popular goth club night in Germany is called "Göttertanz" ("Dance of the Gods") and is described on its website as a "ritual gathering" involving music styles like "ritual, neo-celtic, pagan folk, classic, Gothic, apocalyptic" (Göttertanz 2012).

The *jouissance* of musical immersion returns with a vengeance in Miéville's novel, where King Rat's subterranean throne is endangered by the return of his ancient nemesis: the Pied Piper. This ruthless murderer not only announces his spectral

presence through the sounds of his flute, but also immediately overpowers everyone that hears him through the unstoppable hauntology of his music. Like he did with the rats and the children of Hamelin, the Piper mesmerizes London's rodents, birds, spiders and people into their own destruction. "I'm the Lord of the dance, I'm the Voice, and when I say jump, people jump" (Miéville 1998: 241). If hearing sound in Gothic is a sign of something supernatural, hearing music induces the crossing of boundaries into the supernatural, willingly or unwillingly.

The climax of the book shows the Pied Piper as the high priest of Gothic liturgy. He makes the dancers obey every turn of his ghostly, impossible melody, even when that means that they turn the dance floor into a battlefield and dance into death. His music takes over the hearts and minds of its listeners in a Dionysian ecstasy that takes a turn for the dark. The operating principles of immersion and pleasure are no different here than they are in other forms of dance: it is the depth of immersion in music's reach that determines its transgressive potential. And this is exactly where borders can fade:

Saul felt himself jerk upright, *listened* to the music, heard it with a wave of amazement, stared wide-eyed at the bursts of light around him, saw through the speakers and the walls, felt his mind open up. . . .

Saul danced for joy, opened his arms wide. This was his epiphany, he was filled with music, two strains of music, his mind relaxing and floating, his feet revelling in the dance, gazing up and around at the bobbing bodies on all sides of him, the faces of the worshippers . . . Saul was ecstatic.

(Miéville 1998: 393–94)

All the dimensions of sonic Gothic are at work here: the spectrality of ancient and recorded music; musical hauntology excavating hidden memories of rats and food and sex (Miéville 1998: 393); musical hauntography that leaves meaning "just of out reach" (Miéville 1998: 393); and boundary-breaking liturgy that makes the dancers transgress their own limits, killing the life around them. The liturgical dimension of sonic Gothic itself is the uncanny theme that drives *King Rat*: in this text, musical *jouissance* is inverted and becomes equivalent to the death drive.

"Before all else be armed," ROME's repetitive chords keep saying.

GOTHIC, SOUND, METAPHYSICS

Through its four dimensions, Gothic's sonic dynamic invites a renewed reflection on the genre's relation to the supernatural and the metaphysical. It does so through engaging with the ontological finitude of human Being, which is described most extensively by Martin Heidegger. Because humans are "thrown" into a situation which inevitably ends in their own annihilation, the not-being of death, their Being must existentially be defined as "Being-towards-death" (Heidegger 2005: 277–311). In Heidegger's philosophy this leads to a form of *das Unheimliche* that is different from that to be found in Freudian psychoanalysis. Conscious Being, Heidegger argues, must be uncanny in its fundamental relation with non-Being as the consciousness of its thrownness into finitude gives rise to an existential anxiety: "Insofar as

humans are, they stand in the no-exit of death. Thus Being-here is the happening of un-canniness [*Un-heimlichkeit*] itself” (Heidegger 2000: 169).

Gothic has a long history of questioning the ontological relationship between Being and Time. The ghosts, the vampires and *The X-Files*’ tagline, “The truth is out there,” all reflect a dialogue between Freudian and Heideggerian versions of the uncanny. In its boldly repetitive putting forward of the uncanny possibility of Being beyond time, Gothic negotiates possible answers to the question with which Heidegger ends *Being and Time*: “Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *Being*?” (Heidegger 2005: 488). Sonic Gothic is instrumental in this dialogue. It violates the ontological relationship between Being and Time in various ways: musical spectrality urges the question of *when* Gothic’s ghosts are; musical hauntology engenders an overlap of various pasts and presents; musical hauntography insistently exposes the void of the always-already; and in music-as-liturgy listeners partake in other timespaces. Through its careful mixture of these four dimensions, Gothic music profoundly disturbs the temporality of Being-towards-Death that Heidegger deems essential for the ontology of Being. It thus inverts Heidegger’s question and asks: “What does it mean for Being if its horizon is *beyond* time?”

The dark mirror of Gothic music is permeable, its surface more three-dimensional than that of texts or screens. Music’s porous surface enables it to guide listeners into the borderlands that it is designed to express: Gothic music can take listeners to where formerly opposed binaries of Time and Being collapse. Immersed in this liminality, they find themselves within Gothic spectrality, and that means within a profoundly dislodged temporality as well as ontology. Sonic Gothic enables listeners to experience a time that is off its hinges, and with that a Being that might be haunted, infinite, or unknowable. It surpasses Derridean deconstruction, defies Heideggerian ontology, and with that challenges the Gothicism focus on textuality and psychoanalysis.

REFERENCES

- Botting, F. (1996) *Gothic*. London: Routledge.
- (1999) “The Gothic Production of the Unconscious,” in G. Byron and D. Punter (eds) *Spectral Readings: Towards a Gothic Geography*, London: Macmillan, 11–36.
- Brown, J. (2010) “Carnival of Souls and the Organs of Horror,” in N. Lerner (ed.) *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, London: Routledge, 1–20.
- Danielewski, M.Z. (2001) *House of Leaves*, New York: Doubleday.
- Derrida, J. (2006) *Specters of Marx*, 1994, New York: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. and Stiegler, B. (2008) *Echographies of Television*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Donnelly, K.J. (2005) *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television*, London: British Film Institute.
- Gilbert, J. and Pearson, E. (1999) *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture and the Politics of Sound*, London: Routledge.
- Göttertanz (2012). <http://goettertanz.wordpress.com/>. (accessed November 23, 2012)
- Heidegger, M. (2000) *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1953, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- (2005) *Being and Time*, 1927, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hodkinson, P. (2002) *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*, Oxford: Berg.

- Kramer, L. (2002) *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lerner, N. (2010) "The Strange Case of Rouben Mamoulian's Sound Stew: The Uncanny Soundtrack in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931)" in N. Lerner (ed.) *Music in the Horror Film*, New York: Routledge, 55–79.
- Miéville, C. (1998). *King Rat*. London: Pan Books.
- Miller, P.D. aka DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid (2004) *Rhythm Science*, Cambridge, MA: Mediawork/The MIT Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1995) *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872, New York: Dover.
- van Elferen, I. (2012a) *Gothic Music: The Sounds of the Uncanny*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- (2012b) "Spectral Liturgy: Of Goth Parties and Gothic Music," in J. Edwards and A. Soltysik Monnet (eds) *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture: Pop Goth*, New York: Routledge, 135–47.
- (2013) "The Gothic Bach" *Understanding Bach*, 7. Online. Available HTTP: <http://bachnetwork.co.uk/ub7/UB7_Elferen.pdf>
- Walpole, H. (1968) *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, ed. P. Fairclough in *Three Gothic Novels*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 37–148.

FURTHER READING

- Goodlad, L.M.E. and M. Bibby (eds) (2007) *Goth: Undead Subculture*, Durham: Duke University Press. (Essays exploring the music, cinema, television, fashion, literature, aesthetics and fandoms associated with the goth subculture.)
- Hayward, P. (ed.) (2010) *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*. London: Equinox. (Essays on horror film sound tracks covering composing styles and inter-medial horror effects in orchestral, popular, rock and electronic scores.)
- Middleton, R. (2006) "'Last night a DJ Saved my Life': Avians, Cyborgs and Siren Bodies in the Era of Phonographic Technology," *Radical Musicology*, 1.1. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/2006/Middleton.htm>> (accessed November 23, 2012). (Theorization of the ways in which [musical] recording technology produces auditive simulacra, generates dis- and re-embodied sound perceptions, and problematises notions of liveness and originality.)
- Sterne, J. (2003) *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Durham: Duke University Press. (Cultural history of sound production, which is shown to criss-cross the liminal regions between bodies and machines, originals and copies, life and death.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

GOTHIC LIFESTYLE



Catherine Spooner

For some readers of Gothic fiction, it is not enough merely to consume Gothic narrative on the page (or latterly, the screen): they wish to live gothically, to extend their reading or viewing experience to everyday life. As goth musician and writer Voltaire recalls of his childhood,

I spent countless hours watching “monster movies” – as I called them – enveloped in a dark desire to escape to a fantasy realm such as theirs. A dark, romantic place filled with mystery and drama. A land far-removed and completely unlike the unbearably mundane location in which I lived: the sprawling suburbs of New Jersey.

(Voltaire 2006: vi)

These desires are generally focused around the *mise en scène* of Gothic narrative, its “fantasy realm,” as much as the narrative itself. As in Voltaire’s recollection, they are focused on recreating a Gothic atmosphere through personal style and home décor: converting the “mundane location” of the home into a “dark, romantic place filled with mystery and drama.” Plot takes second place to aesthetics; fantasy is extended into everyday existence through what Mike Featherstone calls “the aestheticization of everyday life,” or “the project of turning life into a work of art” within a culture saturated with signs and images (Featherstone 2007: 65).

For Voltaire, these fantasies resulted on the one hand in a career as a stop-motion animator and then as a “maker of music, films, books, toys” on the goth scene (www.voltaire.net), and on the other in an impulse to decorate his living quarters in a Gothic style, documented in his “Guide to Gothic Homemaking,” *Paint it Black* (2006). In this book, Voltaire describes how to put “A New Spin on Spooky Shelving,” “Decorat[e] With Dead Things,” and “Pimp Your Ride, Dracula Style” (Voltaire 2006: v). Using a combination of items salvaged from skips and thrift stores, cheap market-stall finds and Halloween accessories, black spray-paint and a glue-gun, Voltaire constructs a “Gothic Love Nest . . . that will scream, ‘I’m spooky!’ while still being charming and subdued enough to not scare off potential dates or give your parents a heart attack when they come to visit” (Voltaire 2006: 96).

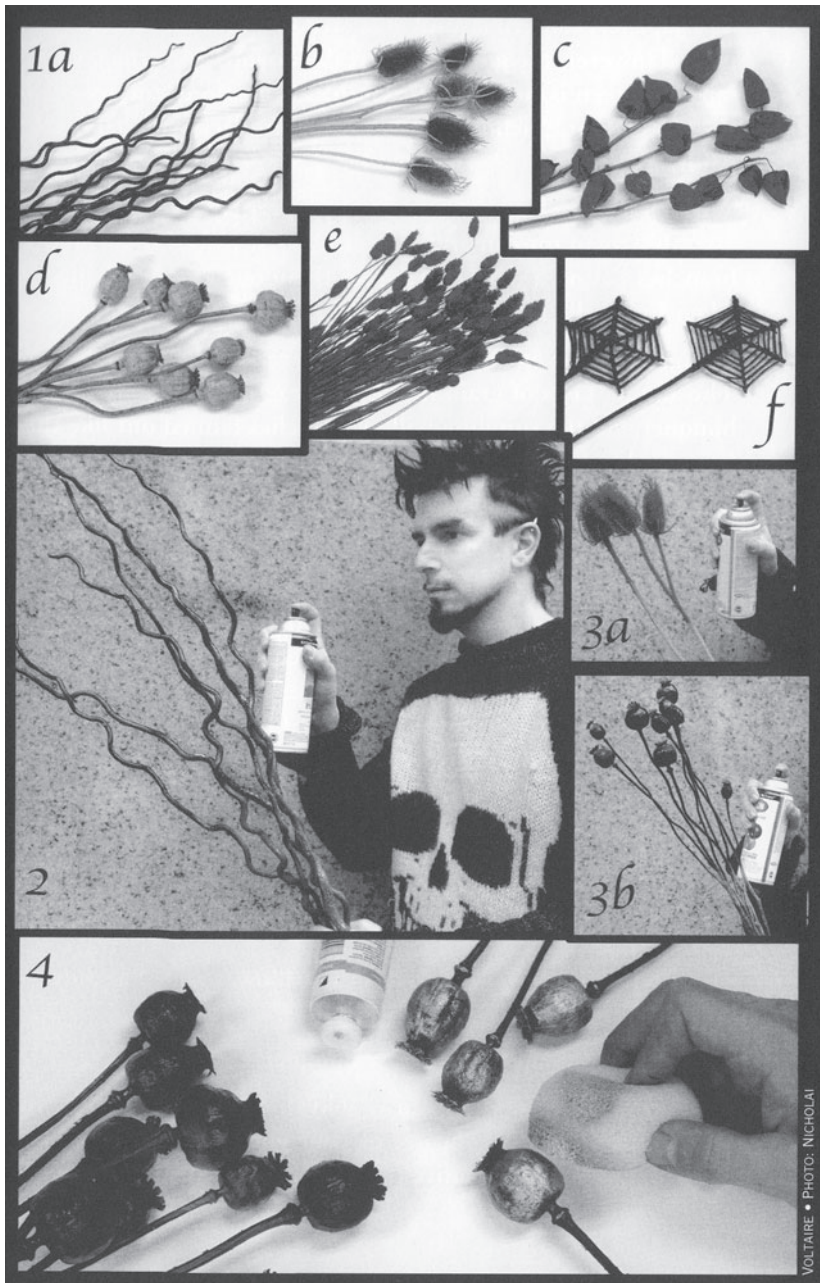


Figure 37.1 Gothic Flower Arranging, *Paint it Black: A Guide to Gothic Homemaking* (2005)

Voltaire thus joins the army of “lifestyle experts” that throng the western media, offering advice on a range of everyday domestic activities including home decorating, cooking, gardening and personal appearance. In keeping with these arbiters of popular taste, Voltaire aims to educate his readers and moderate their vulgar excesses: the Gothic love nest strikes a balance in expressing its creator’s inner spookiness while not offending significant others. The affectivity of true horror is averted: Voltaire semi-parodically draws on a conventional vocabulary of taste in suggesting that, despite its Hellraiser picture frames and customized baby dolls, the newly decorated apartment is just “charming and subdued” enough to appease one’s parents’ criticism.

“Lifestyle” is defined loosely by David Chaney as “the social organization of consumption” (Chaney 1996: 56). Consumption is never an unmediated event: it is structured and codified by any number of frameworks including advertising, leisure activities, commercial space and media narratives – all of which are informed by social class, gender, age, ethnicity and so on. These frameworks are converted, by means of an ethic of the individual, into a means of narrating the self. As Mike Featherstone explains,

The modern individual within consumer culture is made conscious that he speaks not only with his clothes, but with his home, furnishings, decoration, car, and other activities which are to be read and classified in terms of the presence and absence of taste.

(Featherstone 2007: 84)

Taste is the means by which these individuals categorize objects and signs and in doing so categorize themselves; as Pierre Bourdieu famously said, “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier” (Bourdieu 2010: xxix).

This chapter focuses on “lifestyle television,” a mode of popular programming in which lifestyle concerns are prominently foregrounded. Specifically addressing shows that focus on homemaking and personal style, it explores what happens when Gothic is brought into close proximity with conventional markers of taste. The ways in which Gothic is put to work on these shows demonstrate that Gothic in contemporary consumer culture is more than just an empty and desensitized repetition of tropes, and rather reveals complex and nuanced relationships between consumers and objects, “experts” and audiences. Encounters with Gothic lifestyle often push bourgeois ideologies of individual expression and self-improvement to their limits, simultaneously confirming these ideologies while throwing their assumptions into sharp relief.

GOTHIC TASTE

By the end of the twentieth century, the notion of a Gothic lifestyle had become irrevocably blurred with the notion of a *goth* lifestyle. Goth subculture emerged in the late 1970s in the form of an underground scene whose adherents’ propensity for black clothing and morbid stylings earned them the label of “Gothic” by the music press, although many of the individuals concerned, often somewhat bloody-mindedly, did not recognize a connection to an earlier literary tradition. Goth is generally

identified by commentators as a “subculture,” in that it is distinct from or even resistant to mainstream culture and identified by a variety of markers used to distinguish subcultures, such as spectacular style and group commitment to a shared identity. It is also, however, a “taste culture,” one that overlaps with a wider group of individuals who may not identify themselves as goths but who make choices about what clothes they wear, what music they listen to and what leisure activities they enjoy, based on a perceived Gothic aesthetic. Significantly, goth’s consolidation and expansion through the western world coincided with the period in which Tania Lewis argues that the concept of “lifestyle” consolidated, as 1980s consumer culture began to normalize consumption as a way of life (Lewis 2008: 39).

As Paul Hodgkinson (2002) has demonstrated, goth subculture is thoroughly imbued with the processes of consumption, as participants purchase music, make-up, clothes and accessories in the process of fashioning their identities, and numerous small producers cater to their niche tastes, distributing their wares through small boutiques, market stalls and online platforms. Goth is therefore, I would argue, continuous with a broader culture of consumption in which Gothic is offered up to consumers in a variety of novel and inventive ways, from children’s toys to high street fashion, sweets and chocolate to home décor. Gothic lifestyle is not confined to subcultural consumers; it is increasingly a feature of the mainstream marketplace, where it is not necessarily the dominant choice in consumers’ lives, but may feature in more transient or ephemeral ways, to be enjoyed for a single evening or combined with a wide range of other stylistic preferences. Gothic fashion appears in malls and high street shops from Hot Topic to TopShop; high profile advertising campaigns draw on Gothic imagery; lifestyle television shows screen Gothic-themed episodes; toy manufacturers including brand leaders Lego and Mattel market Gothic ranges; Halloween has become an international, multi-billion dollar industry.

If these modern ephemera are specific to the last 30 years of western culture, they nevertheless cannot entirely be divorced from the Gothic tradition, which has always been intrinsically related to consumption. Gothic fiction emerged at a particular point in history, when the Enlightenment conception of the individual coincided with the birth of consumer culture. As a result, it was inextricably linked to the notion of the commodity and to emerging concepts of leisure. As E.J. Clery explains, in Enlightenment discourse, “supernatural fiction figures as the ultimate luxury commodity” (Clery 1995: 7). For many eighteenth-century commentators, Gothic novels made representation of what was fantastic and unreal and were unredeemed by the pedagogical purpose expected of fiction. Their enjoyment was defined purely in terms of affect. As the century wore on, Gothic also spoke to an emerging Romanticism in which, as Clive Bloom suggests, “The gothic went from being merely a set of despised literary and architectural devices to a way of life and a way of thinking about the self” (Bloom 2010: 64).

At the same time, objective standards of beauty first began to be challenged by the notion that aesthetics are mediated through individual perception. As Luc Ferry establishes, in the Platonic and Christian thought that held sway prior to the Enlightenment, beauty was measured by absolute standards of truth that transcended human experience; with the birth of the individual, the measure of those standards was redefined in terms of human judgment (Ferry 1993). While it was some time before taste became considered completely subjective, an important paradigm shift

had taken place. The neoclassical preoccupation with order, proportion and decorum was questioned by proponents of Gothic taste, proponents who seized on what Chris Brooks calls “the possibility of a rival body of historically validated architectural knowledge” (Brooks 1999: 90). Irregularity, asymmetry and embellishment became valid aesthetic strategies, expressive of a *difference* in taste rather than *outré* barbarism.

Gothic’s association with *bad* taste, however, has proved difficult to shake off. The excessive and sensational properties of Gothic novels, as well as the rejection of Gothic Revival style by modernism in the twentieth century, have led to persistent associations of Gothic with the florid, trashy or overwrought. This is further complicated by the fact that Gothic may itself be divided into high and low, the highbrow and culturally legitimated stylings of Gothic Revival architecture and the “pop Gothic” of commercial culture. Between these two poles float texts and artifacts which take on different degrees of legitimacy at any given time, so that a novel like *Wuthering Heights* (1847), for example, may have been regarded as “coarse and disagreeable” on publication (Anon. 1992: 39), but has since been fully renovated to the literary canon. The adoption of Gothic as a subcultural aesthetic, moreover, deliberately deploys its reputation as a bad-taste aesthetic as a mode of resistance to mainstream values.

The most significant precursor to modern notions of Gothic lifestyle was Horace Walpole, author of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), subtitled “A Gothic Story” in its second edition and commonly held to be the first Gothic novel. In 1750, Walpole appointed two of his friends to a “Committee on Taste” to plan modifications of his comparatively modest riverside villa, Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, with the aim of converting it into an imaginary Gothic castle. The resulting confection, realized in stages until 1776, was simultaneously the first Gothic Revival building to be based on authentic medieval designs, and a wild architectural fantasy. As Chris Brooks writes, “Walpole’s copies are both conscientious and cavalier. Faithful enough in form and detail, they are wildly discrepant in scale and material, and blithely ignore architectural propriety.” As a consequence, Gothic is “Liberated into pure style” (Brooks 1999: 87). Strawberry Hill provided the stage-set for Walpole’s performance of an elaborate and often eccentric persona. An avid collector of antiquities and bizarre curios, Walpole would turn up to greet guests dressed in a carved wooden cravat and elbow-length embroidered gloves that had belonged to James I.

Strawberry Hill thus inaugurated not only the Gothic literary tradition through its manifestation in *Otranto*, but also a tradition of Gothic interior design as expression of unique personal taste, a means of curating the self. Walpole was by no means the first to explore Gothic design elements in architecture, but in Strawberry Hill they became linked in the hitherto most coherent and holistic way to the fashioning of a Gothic subject through style choices. Walpole Gothicized his suburban villa by embellishing not only the exterior structure, but also the interior, with paintings, antiques, curios, china, wallpaper, stained glass, mirrors, ornate fireplaces, ceiling molds and so on. Many of the objects on display, such as Dr Dee’s scrying mirror or the suit of gilded armor believed to have belonged to King Francis I of France, were thoroughly integrated into his personal mythology. As he stated, “Visions you know have always been my pasture . . . Old castles, old pictures, old histories and the babble of old people make one live back into centuries that cannot disappoint one”

(Walpole 1857: 457). Nostalgia was mediated through a modern emphasis on comfort: “In Truth I do not mean to make my house so Gothic as to exclude convenience and modern refinements in luxury” (Walpole 1987: 248–49). Walpole was a connoisseur, an arbiter of taste, but many of his preferences were tangential to, or directly contradictory of, the accepted taste of the times. Subsequent Gothic Revivalists such as A.W.N. Pugin did not take Strawberry Hill seriously, criticizing Walpole for taking little heed of original scale and materials, as well as his designs’ decorativeness, their lack of utility. His influence stretches beyond architecture, however: Michael Snodin, the curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s 2010 exhibition gathering together Walpole’s lost collection, suggests that, “Walpole’s cultural legacy was to pioneer a kind of imaginative self-expression in building, furnishing and collecting which still inspires us today. I suppose one of the take-home messages of the exhibition is: why not try it yourself?” (Vickery 2010).

Approximately 250 years separate Walpole’s Strawberry Hill and Voltaire’s Gothic love nest, but Walpole’s emphasis on the rich imaginative potential offered by visions of “old castles, old pictures, old histories” echoes through Voltaire’s own lament for “the romance and pageantry of the past” in a world of “blue jeans and khakis and baseball caps” (Voltaire 2006: x). Voltaire may lack the economic and cultural capital – or, in modern Manhattan, the space – to achieve a Gothic vision on the scale of Strawberry Hill, but he is engaged in a similar process of “imaginative self-expression” and a similar process of cultural remediation whereby he collects, displays and performs the Gothic and in doing so both ameliorates the Gothic with “convenience and modern refinements in luxury” and educates his audience in the niceties of Gothic taste.

LIFESTYLE TELEVISION

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the work of educating the populace in matters of taste is increasingly taken on by lifestyle television, a term used broadly to encompass home and fashion makeover shows, cookery and gardening programs, and other shows in which “experts” dispense advice to weekly guests and the television viewer. Ever hungry for a new theme, British lifestyle programs such as *Changing Rooms* (Bazalgette, Booth-Clibborn and Vaughan-Barrett 1996–2004), *Home Front* (BBC 1992–2000), *Grand Designs* (Talkback Thames/Fremantle Media, 1999–), *Heston’s Feasts* (Optomen 2009–10), *The Wedding House* (Betty 2010), *Gok’s Fashion Fix* (Cheetah Television, 2008–9), *Gok’s Style Secrets* (Ricochet TV, 2013–) and *Snog Marry Avoid?* (Remarkable Television, 2008–) have all produced Gothic-themed episodes or segments. These shows have been widely franchised and/or imitated and their format will be familiar to the majority of western viewers.

The incorporation of Gothic into lifestyle programming creates an interesting tension. Lifestyle television has a pedagogical purpose: it purports to educate the masses in the acquisition of taste and the fashioning of a “successful” performative self. It is characteristically middle-class in ethos, espousing the values of industrious self-improvement and productive leisure. Gothic is also frequently designated a middle-class genre, written by and catering for the emerging middle classes and purveying what Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall sardonically call “Fear and

Trembling in the Bourgeois Psyche” (Baldick and Mighall 2012: 279). As explained above, however, Gothic is frequently made to represent “bad” taste, the sort of look one should be educated out of. Rarely, though, do these shows simply reject Gothic wholesale: rather, they create arbitrary distinctions between good and bad kinds of Gothic, putting Gothic to work in different ways. Increasingly, as Emma McEvoy argues, Gothic is used in popular entertainment as “the mark of a particular kind of cultural literacy,” embedding audiences “into a shared history of popular culture” (McEvoy 2012: 170). Each of these shows therefore struggles between a perception of Gothic as a difficult or unacceptable style choice and one in which Gothic forms a particular kind of cultural capital, imbued with literary and historical knowledge. They also struggle with the “dark” or disruptive elements of Gothic, which are inevitably contained by an aesthetics of consumer pleasure.

Many participants in goth subculture, far from resisting the pedagogical impulse purveyed by such programming, adopt it enthusiastically and only semi-ironically. Voltaire’s guide to goth DIY is mentioned above; Jillian Venters’s book and blog, *Gothic Charm School* (2009), offers lifestyle advice modeled on the nineteenth-century etiquette book (see Spooner 2013). The influence of lifestyle programming is articulated most clearly, however, on a website entitled *Gothic Martha Stewart*, which has been online since the late 1990s. Run by homecraft enthusiast Trystan L. Bass, it appropriates the expertise propagated by wholesome, American, lifestyle TV celebrity Martha Stewart in the service of creating a beautiful Gothic home. As Bass explains,

If Martha Stewart were really gothic, color is the only thing she’d have to change. Her central ideas are already well suited to the gothic subculture. Martha adores finding old linens and gently worn furniture at flea markets. She sews a lot of her own household dressings. She paints and experiments with unusual painting techniques on objects small and large. She loves flowers, live and dried. Her style flirts with Victorian, Art Deco, and modern elements and frequently mixes them into a very beautiful mishmash.

(*Gothic Martha Stewart* 2012)

She adds, “Btw, no, I’m not a professional interior designer; I just watch too much Home and Garden TV. If I can do this stuff, anyone can.” The website is adorned with plentiful images of Bass’s home, which combines faux-Victoriana with the resolutely modern and everyday (“Media towers and entertainment center”) and some overtly Gothic flourishes (mock gargoyles over the bookcase). Bass simultaneously positions herself as the audience of lifestyle television and as unofficial expert in her own right, the dispenser of subcultural lifestyle advice. The Gothic Martha Stewart has its cake and eats it: it retains its subcultural integrity while reconciling that with the middle-class values of industrious self-improvement and productive leisure embodied in lifestyle television. Bass’s description of the wide variety of leisure activities undertaken in her living room tellingly includes watching “countless hours” of TV as well as “stitch[ing] and bitch[ing].”

Over the last fifteen years or so, Gothic has repeatedly cropped up on British lifestyle television. Unsurprisingly perhaps, interior design programming in particular provides a rich source of Gothic, from Liz Wagstaff’s Gothic bedroom for

Changing Rooms (“create a gothic vampires’ playground with a modern twist”), to Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen’s Pugin-inspired Gothic living room for *Home Front* (“create an elegantly simple room with Gothic rhythm and proportion, but without the Victorian Gothic detail”) (*BBC Homes*). Gothic on these shows tends to do little more than extend the middle-class ideologies of individualism and self-expression through consumer choice that the programs as a whole embody, offering in many instances a kind of “limit case” for this ideology (the presenters flag the style as difficult or outrageous). Gothic design might offer a mild frisson of transgression, but this is offered up as a titillating diversion rather than anything more substantial. Gothic is presented alongside a panoply of other design styles as an aesthetics of pleasure, specifically connoting fantasy and sensual indulgence. A house resembling those more usually found in Gothic novels – one that creates discomfort or unease – cannot be countenanced. The home owners on *Changing Rooms* may recoil in a moment of uncanny recognition when they see their redecorated home for the first time, but this is tied to no more distressing feeling than having one’s consumer preferences misperceived or misunderstood.

One of the most interesting instances of Gothic on a home makeover show occurred on Channel Four’s *Grand Designs*, broadcast in 2008. The show, presented by architectural expert Kevin McCloud, “follows some of Britain’s most ambitious self-building projects, as intrepid individuals attempt to design and construct the home of their dreams.” Series 6, episode 4 follows professional couple Jo and Shaun Bennett as they attempt to build a family home, from scratch, in a Gothic style. The couple have no previous experience of design or construction and refuse to employ a project manager, so the narrative of the episode focuses on their naivety in taking on such an ambitious project and the inevitable crises that ensue. The house becomes represented as something that repeatedly resists their control, figured in spiraling costs and their inability to order the correct materials. More specifically, it is depicted as being architecturally unbalanced and out of proportion. On a visit to the thirteenth-century Goodrich Castle, McCloud explains,

The reason great big stone staircases and doorways and fireplaces work in an old castle like this is because they’re all in proportion, in scale to the building, whereas put those items in a five-bedroom detached house and they just look ridiculous.

(McCloud on *Grand Designs*)

Tensions center on a six-foot-tall fireplace that the Bennetts plan to have constructed from local stone, to adorn their modestly proportioned living room. On being shown a mock-up of the fireplace, Shaun Bennett is delighted, emphatically declaring, “That is *exactly* what I want.” McCloud persuades him to scale it down to proportions more in keeping with the room – but visiting the finished house, is dismayed to find that the Bennetts have juxtaposed the rescaled fireplace with an equally outsized plasma TV. Walpole’s combination of Gothic with “convenience and modern refinements in luxury” is realized with a vengeance.

McCloud repeatedly criticizes the Bennetts not only for their lack of expertise but also for their presumed lack of taste. The house is slated for lacking architectural integrity, for being extravagant, for “weird juxtapositions of scale,” for fakery



Figure 37.2 Gothic Fireplace, *Grand Designs*, Series 6 episode 4, Channel 4, February 6, 2008

(resembling a film set or a theme pub), and perversely, for not being Gothic enough: “So far, it’s more executive home than Gothic fantasy.” These descriptions frame and present the house in a way that actually functions to make it more Gothic: excessive, discomfiting, counterfeit. Jo Bennett sourcing fireplace designs on the web is like a modern-day version of Horace Walpole copying engravings of tombs from Westminster Abbey for fireplaces at Strawberry Hill; the expensive oak cladding over cheap pine beams is reminiscent of Strawberry Hill’s papier maché ceilings.

The Bennetts’ design evidently does not rival that of Walpole or possess anything like the same cultural significance. Within the milieu of lifestyle television, however, its presentation is highly revealing of the way that Gothic can be made to function as a discursive site through which competing forms of taste are produced. Two indistinctly distinguished kinds of Gothic are pitted against each other: an implicitly Ruskinian Gothic representing architectural integrity, historical nostalgia and good taste, and a modern-day Gothic associated with fakery, the middle-class *parvenu* and trashy popular culture. These two frequently overlap, as the program is apparently unaware that there are different strands to the Gothic Revival and repeatedly mixes them up. On the one hand, the Bennetts are cast as modern-day barbarians, disrupting the conventions of civilized middle-class taste. The more Gothic the house becomes, the more fake and out of proportion, the more transgressive it is of those taste criteria. On the other hand, the Bennetts’ passion for their project is repeatedly cited as an excuse or rationale for their unconventional approach: “It’s just so personal to them.” Gothic becomes constructed as the ultimate expression of middle-class individualism and self-expression through consumer choice. Within the lifestyle television narrative, then, Gothic provides both a radical and conservative function, simultaneously disrupting its ideologies and confirming them.

GOTH LIFE/STYLE

If interior decorating shows are fertile ground for Gothic lifestyle programming, then the makeover show is even more so. Makeover shows characteristically produce a normalized bourgeois subject by teaching techniques of self-management, usually focused around the body, personal appearance and sartorial style but also sometimes incorporating social skills and emotional literacy. Like interior decorating shows, makeover shows aim to educate their audiences about taste, but they do so in a potentially more intrusive way, in that the modes of consumption they address are intimately related to the subject's self-esteem and body image. Subjects who do not meet normative criteria are subjected to judgment diegetically from the TV "experts," friends and family and often complete strangers, as well as extra-diegetically from the TV audience.

Fashion historian Valerie Steele argues that "Gothic fashion is . . . a rejection of 'normal', 'natural' beauty in favor of an alternative vision of horrific, excessive, artificial and (sometimes) sexually fetishistic beauty" (Steele and Park 2008: 79). Gothic fashion, as she describes it, is found in the milieus of both the goth scene and high fashion, where it becomes part of the repertoire of the avant-garde. The designers and brands celebrated by Steele, whether *haute couture* (Alexander McQueen, Gareth Pugh, John Galiano) or subcultural (Kambriel, Cyberdog, h.Naoto), disregard and often deliberately challenge mainstream perceptions of good taste, while at the same time confirming the taste preferences of their particular milieus. In mainstream fashion, however – the kind of fashion available in malls and high street stores – Gothic is palatable for mass consumption only when mediated by other properties such as glamour or romance. This is clearly evident in the language of contemporary fashion magazines when dealing with Gothic trends on the catwalk and their mediation to the everyday consumer. A beauty editorial in the September 2012 issue of British *Vogue* headed "Dark Romance," for example, indicated "If ever you've toyed with the idea of embracing your inner goth, this is the season to do it . . . just add Kohl pencil and an air of mystery" ("Dark Romance" 2012: 364). This maneuver is so familiar that it may even, as in a witty editorial in *Grazia* magazine, be inverted so that Gothic is itself regarded as mediating an even more difficult trend: florals. ("Pretty Fierce" 2008: 29; see also Spooner 2012). Its more "horrific, excessive, artificial" aspects challenge conventional taste criteria and are ripe for the kind of judgment and amelioration meted out on the makeover show.

An excellent example is provided by celebrity stylist Gok Wan's *Gok's Style Secrets*, a show that grooms long-term singles for the dating scene. Its inaugural episode introduces Zoe, a science-fiction fan with a penchant for tattoos, black clothing and cosplay. Although Zoe never describes herself as goth, Gok repeatedly uses the word as shorthand for a look that is constructed as childish, self-indulgent, fake and off-putting to prospective romantic partners. Gok instructs Zoe that they will "find the real you beneath the eyeliner" and makes the pop psychology assessment that one of the reasons she is attracted to "skulls, death, vampires" is that "when you're in that world, other people don't want to go with you." He repeatedly refers to Zoe's enjoyment of "dress up" and cosplay as playing a character that implicitly inhibits, rather than aids, her self-expression. Gothic performativity is therefore constructed as psychological flaw, while the glossy looks Gok creates for

Zoe are somehow more authentic to her “real” self, a product of his superior insight into her psyche. Most troubling of all, goth is made to oppose both adult femininity (“Hello, I’m a woman, I’m not an androgynous Goth,” Gok teases) and normal social interaction (“Who would have thought Zoe, the depressed emo goth, would be sitting in a bar chatting to a table of people?”). While Gok repeatedly asserts that he aims to preserve Zoe’s individuality, he nevertheless effectively collapses subcultural distinctions: science-fiction fandom, goth and emo are all made to represent a homogenous mass of bad taste to be burnt off and refined into the more acceptable fashion terms of “different . . . left-of-centre, avant-garde, contemporary.” What unites the three is their childish, “androgynous” aspect, which becomes constructed in the episode as what Robert Mighall has described, in the context of Victorian Gothic, as “anachronistic vestiges” which threaten progress – here the progress of the heroine from child to sexual maturity (Mighall 2000: 18). Hence, goth itself is Gothicized. Zoe’s heavy black boots and chokers are replaced with 1950s-inspired ensembles reminiscent of Amy Winehouse or Paloma Faith: a “fashionable” reiteration of alternative style that erases the particular and specific subcultural affiliations of the individual and assumes that any style aslant of mainstream culture is interchangeable.

More intriguing cases of goth makeovers occur on BBC3’s *Snog Marry Avoid?* The premise of this show is that a computer called Pod (an acronym for Personal Overhaul Device) makes *under* participants with overtly artificial appearances to reveal their “natural beauty”. Most participants sport variations of the “WAG” (soccer Wives And Girlfriends) look of perma-tan, hair extensions and false eyelashes, but goth types also occasionally enter Pod for her caustic dissection. The show has an ironic dimension from the start in that its ideology of “natural beauty” is promoted by a robot – itself obviously a fake persona for the anonymous army of stylists who actually perform the makeovers. This automated persona nevertheless frees the show from the charismatic presence of the star presenter and their requirement to control the narrative, enabling the guests, on occasion, to present counter narratives and reclaim control over the makeover process. Guests engage in banter with Pod and sometimes refuse to accept her intervention, or conversely are rejected by her as suitable makeover subjects, particularly if they appear confident with the way they look. Contrary to the usual narrative of makeover shows, where subjects may initially express resistance but are won over by the end of the program, *Snog Marry Avoid?* documents resistance and sometimes even downright dissent. Modern freakshow performer Nick Painless retorts, “I *am* naturally beautiful; this is the way I should be” (4.9). Cruella de Vil-styled Angel Rose declares, “Fake is fabulous!” (3.12). “Military Cybergoth” Ebony insists, “I know you couldn’t do anything to make me look better in a different style” (2.9). Similarly, goths who do undergo “makeunders” often strongly assert their preference for their old look, which they return to at the end of the program. Goth fashion student Tommy concedes, “It was fun, but next time leave the styling to me, Pod” (3.11). Goth couple Emily and Karl report, “We pretty much went back as soon as we could” (1.2). “Gothic Punk Tranny” Kate Hughes returns in a leopard-print gimp suit so outrageous that it exceeds even her previous “Pat Butcher meets Frankenstein” confections, concluding, “I realized [Pod’s] done me a big favour as I realized natural beauty is not for me – it’s fakery, fakery, fakery all the way” (5.2).

Snog Marry Avoid? therefore enables a double discourse in relation to goth style in a way that more conventional makeover shows do not. On the one hand, it affirms an ideology of “natural” beauty and mainstream fashion norms, acting as a kind of contemporary freakshow on which those who choose to resist the norm are paraded before a voyeuristic audience; on the other, it provides a platform for goth and other alternative subjects to display and defend their look, “answering back” their critics, and celebrating the “fakery” of Gothic. As such it anticipates the reversal of the makeover motif within the subculture itself. Voltaire’s comic guide to the goth scene, *What is Goth?* (2004), contains two makeovers, in which “ordinary” subjects are converted to goth style. What these makeovers make clear is that the subculture itself is not exempt from judgments of taste. Voltaire instructs that foundation should be “no more than three shades lighter than your natural skin tone; we’re creating a goth, not a circus clown” and “Be sure to blend below the chin line (unless you want to look like an evil mime)” (Voltaire 2004: 58). Voltaire articulates what Sarah Thornton, adapting Bourdieu, calls “subcultural capital,” forms of alternative knowledge that produce distinction *within* subcultures (Thornton 1995). He also, however, closely replicates the kind of judgments made on mainstream makeover shows.

When Gothic becomes lifestyle, therefore, it becomes incorporated into a broader range of value judgments about consumer choice in everyday life. It is not as simple as Gothic representing bad taste: rather, Gothic becomes subject to a series of fine discriminations and internal distinctions, rendering its meaning specific and localized within different contexts. Within lifestyle programming, Gothic is alternately celebrated as the ultimate expression of consumer individualism, and denigrated in order to shore up the particular values the program endorses. This dichotomy is broadly repeated in goth subculture, which produces its own internal distinctions between more or less acceptable styles and forms of behavior. Neither Gothic, nor goth, lifestyle can be wholly oppositional in the twenty-first century: they are subordinated to a broader culture of consumer choice, in which they become one more option in the process of styling the self. That does not, however, render them meaningless: as these examples have shown, Gothic continues to produce moments of difficulty or discomfort within the seamless manufacture of lifestyle, complicating easy judgments in the production and transmission of taste.

REFERENCES

- Anon. (1992) “*Spectator*, 18 December 1847,” in M. Allott (ed.), *Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights: A Casebook*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Baldick, C. and Mighall, R. (2012) “Gothic Criticism,” in D. Punter (ed.) *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 267–87.
- BBC Homes – *Design Inspiration*. Online. [page no longer available] HTTP: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/homes/design/design_inspiration/> (accessed August 1, 2011).
- Bloom, C. (2010) *Gothic Histories: The Taste for Terror, 1764 to the Present*. London: Continuum.
- Bourdieu, P. (2010) *Distinction*, trans. R. Nice, London: Routledge.
- Brooks, C. (1999) *The Gothic Revival*, London: Phaidon.
- Chaney, D. (1996) *Lifestyles*, London: Routledge.
- Clery, E.J. (1995) *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Featherstone, M. (2007) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 2nd edn, London: Sage.
- Ferry, L. (1993) *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*, trans. R. de Loaiza, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gothic Martha Stewart*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.trystancraft.com/martha/>> (accessed October 1, 2012).
- Grand Designs – Channel 4*. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/grand-designs>> (accessed October 1, 2012).
- Hodkinson, P. (2002) *Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture*. Oxford: Berg.
- Lewis, T. (2008) *Smart Living: Lifestyle Media and Popular Expertise*. New York: Peter Lang.
- McEvoy, E. (2012) “‘Boo!’ to Taboo’: Gothic Performance at British Festivals”, in J. Edwards and A. Soltysik Monnet (eds) *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Culture: PopGoth*, London: Routledge, 165–81.
- Mighall, R. (1999) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History’s Nightmares*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2000) *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- “Pretty Fierce” (2008) *Grazia* 3 Mar. 29.
- Spooner, C. (2012) “‘Forget Nu Rave, We’re Into Nu Grave’: Styling Gothic in the Twenty-First Century” in J. Edwards and A. Soltysik Monnet (eds), *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Culture: PopGoth*, London: Routledge, 182–94.
- (2013) “*Gothic Charm School*, or, How Vampires Learned to Sparkle” in S. George and B. Hughes (eds.) *Open Graves, Open Minds: The Vampire in the Twenty-First Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Forthcoming.
- Steele, V. and Park, J. (2008) *Gothic: Dark Glamour*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Thornton, S. (1995) *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Venters, J. (2009) *Gothic Charm School: An Essential Guide for Goths and Those Who Love Them*, New York: Harper Collins.
- Vickery, A. (2010) “Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill,” *The Guardian*, Saturday February 20. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/feb/20/horace-walpole-strawberry-hill> (accessed January 25 2013).
- Voltaire (2004) *What is Goth?* Boston, MA: Weiser Books.
- (2006) *Paint it Black: A Guide to Gothic Homemaking*, Boston, MA: Weiser Books.
- Walpole, H. (1857) “Letter to George Montagu, Esq., Jan 5, 1766,” in *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. 7, ed. P. Cunningham. London: Richard Bentley. 459.
- (1987) “Walpole’s Preface to *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole*,” in P. Sabor (ed.), *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 246–49.

FURTHER READING

- Goodlad, L. and Bibby, M. (2007) *Goth: Undead Subculture*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Collection of essays on all aspects of the Goth scene.)
- Spooner, C. (2006) *Contemporary Gothic*, London: Reaktion. (Book covering Gothic in contemporary culture with an emphasis on fashion and consumption.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

GOTHIC AND SURVIVAL HORROR VIDEOGAMES



Ewan Kirkland

THE PORTAL AND THE PENDULUM

The protagonist wakes to find herself alone in a small cell, to be greeted by a strangely inhuman disembodied voice which echoes across the walls of her confinement. A mystical portal opens up, allowing her to exit, whereupon she finds herself forced to negotiate a series of dungeon chambers. Each presents her with a puzzle that must be solved, employing a mysterious device which allows her to manipulate the space of her environment. Throughout her progress, the voice continues to accompany her, providing instructions, advice and the occasionally disquieting statement. If the challenges are successfully completed, the voice promises, there will be cake. As the puzzles increase in their complexity, so does the sense that there is something sinister in the protagonist's situation, personified in the omnipresent omniscient voice which follows her activities. While not actually malicious, the voice seems to have a disconcertingly casual attitude toward the protagonist's safety. The puzzles involve navigating pools of toxic water and sentry-patrolled corridors. A hidden alcove, accessible through a gap in the wall, is scrawled with graffiti left by a previous prisoner. "The cake," one victim warns "is a lie." Eventually the lie is revealed, the subject must escape the torture chamber in which she is trapped, and proceed on a different quest: to find and destroy her tormentor. Except, upon defeating the adversary and escaping her confinement, the embattled heroine is taunted with the discovery that the owner of the voice lives on in spectral form, and will continue to do so long after she is dead and buried.

Familiar to anyone with a knowledge of contemporary videogame culture, this is the narrative of *Portal*, a puzzle game published by Valve which achieved computer-game cult status following its release in 2007. *Portal*'s high-tech world of white featureless test chambers, artificially intelligent super computers, laser-targeting security robots and the portal gun itself, an elegant device allowing the player to pass through one flat surface to another, has none of the imagery commonly associated with Gothic culture. Nevertheless, with its persecuted protagonist buried alive in the Aperture Science test center, its increasingly twisted series of puzzles and the enigmatic figure of deranged AI GLaDOS – who, following her defeat in the game's

closing boss battle, famously sings of how she is still alive, downloaded into another terminal prior to her defeat by the player – this game has something distinctly Gothic in theme and tone. While the contemporary culture of digital games seems considerably removed from a mode rooted in classic literature, the Gothic mode, as Catherine Spooner asserts, has never been solely restricted to books. Magic-lantern shows, sensationalist theater, television, comics and digital media are included amongst the range of popular forms which the sub-genre has influenced (Spooner 2007: 195). Other contemporary Gothic forms and cultures include radio (Andrew Smith 2007: 132–40), graphic novels (Punter 1996: 146–49), and celebrity culture (Armitt 2011: 10–11). Science fiction, horror and fantasy are amongst the staple videogame genres, all existing in close proximity on library bookshelves to fiction which might be labeled as “Gothic.” The horror genre, Richard Rouse suggests (2009), has proven particularly useful as a source for videogame designers, so it should come as no surprise that the Gothic sub-genre should have a strong presence in the medium. The neo-medieval fantasy which Eddo Stern (2002) regards as a recurring presence in online computer games, functioning to mystify the technological basis of the medium, parallels the evocation of an imagined past in Gothic literature as reflecting nineteenth-century ambivalences toward processes of modernization and industrialization. Gillian Skirrow’s (1986) discussion of videogame play as the symbolic exploration of the mother’s body resonates with the sense of the uncanny frequently associated with Gothic architecture and storytelling. Full of explosive scenes of violence and carnage, baroque fantasy landscapes, cyborgian hybrids and ambivalences of narrative and identity, Gothic themes resonate throughout videogame cultures.

This continuity is evident in Fred Botting’s chapter on the contemporary Gothic, which incorporates discussion of the first person shooter *DOOM* (1993), the *Tomb Raider* (1996–) adventure series and the zombie videogame franchise, *Resident Evil* (1996–). Homologies between computer games and Gothic traditions, Botting suggests, include the ways in which the reader of Gothic fiction participates in the narrative and the active participation of the player in a digital game: the emphasis on excitement and emotion produced through Gothic prose and the visceral adrenalin-pumping videogame experience of running along virtual labyrinths shooting mutant soldiers; eighteenth-century aesthetics and the “artificial sublimity” of digital worlds “designed to evoke horror and terror”; the uncanny nature of automata, ghostly doubles, and the digital avatar (Botting 2004: 277–78). Just as eighteenth-century aesthetes criticized Romantic fiction, videogames are attached as sensationalist, violent and over-stimulating. Videogame scholar James Newman (2008) notes the ways in which the medium is frequently dismissed as a trivial and worthless distraction from more improving activities, the guilty pleasure with which playing videogames is associated, (unsubstantiated) claims concerning their negative impact on players’ psychology and behavior, and criticism amongst high-ranking establishment figures attacking the “immediate gratification” and “hedonistic” nature of computer games. Boris Johnson’s pejorative description of children “bleeping and zapping in speechless rapture, their passive faces washed in explosions and gore” whose “souls seem to have been sucked down the cathode ray tube” (Johnson 2006) evokes a particularly Gothic image of the adolescent game player transfixed by violent images, merging with the machine and possessed and dehumanized by ghostly external

forces. Perversely, many games can be seen in their content and marketing to capitalize upon expectations that videogames will shock middle-class sensibilities. *Postal* (1997), *State of Emergency* (2002) and *Grand Theft Auto 3* (2001) present themselves as deliberately controversial, incorporating hyper-violent gameplay, dark social satire and conspicuous political incorrectness as part of their implied pleasures. Games such as *OneeChanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers* (2008), *House of the Dead: Overkill* (2009) and *Lollipop Chainsaw* (2012) combine soft-core porn aesthetics, extreme violence and foul language in a gleefully trash-cultural experience.

Emerging as a cultural presence in the later quarter of the twentieth century, videogames might be considered an extraordinarily postmodern cultural form. Aspects of the postmodern in videogames cultures considered by Garry Crawford and Jason Rutter (2006) include the celebrity status of virtual superstar Lara Croft, the consumerist imperative across *The Sims* series (2000–), and the perception that sports simulations might replace real-world sporting activity amongst young people. Given the habitual blurring of boundaries in Gothic culture, Skirrow's observation that videogames constitute a site of confusion "between fantasy and science, between high-tech and primitivism, and between play and real life" (Skirrow 1986: 118) indicates communality between preoccupations of postmodernity and the Gothic in videogame cultures. Andrew Smith is amongst many authors to argue that postmodernism appears "peculiarly suited to the Gothic" (Smith 2007: 141), aspects of which include exaggerated, excessive and anti-realist aesthetics, the muddying of high/low cultural distinctions (Becker 1999: 7), a "certain sliding of location," the "divisions and doublings of the self" and "threatened subjectivity" (Punter and Byron: 2006: 51). Such aspects can be seen in *Dante's Inferno* (2010), a hack-n-slash videogame which concludes in hyperbolic images of the player's gruesome death with quotes from the epic poem, in the effortless manner in which the plumber protagonist of *Super Mario Galaxy* (2007) leaps from planet to planet, or in the ways in which *Lego Star Wars*' (1999) freeplay mode allows the user to switch between an eclectic range of characters from different episodes of the series at the touch of a button. Allan Lloyd Smith's (1996) discussion of the postmodern Gothic provides further parallels. The indeterminacy of the Gothic novel, and of the postmodern in general, is reflected in the variability of the videogame narrative. Interactive elements and randomly generated content mean that each player experiences a videogame text slightly differently. More significantly, many narrative-based videogames incorporate a variety of endings that are dependent on the particular player's performance. The emphasis on surface and depthless images in postmodern culture and Gothic fiction, be it in the form of a concentration on external detail or two-dimensional characters lacking in psychological complexity, is appropriate for a visual medium where, unlike photography, cinema or television, there is no referent behind the image. Postmodern writing and Gothic literature's fascination with the criminal and the perverted can be seen in series like *Hitman* (2000), *Saints Row* (2006) and the notorious *Manhunt* (2003), in which the player is encouraged to perform a series of brutal virtual attacks on villains located in a space of urban dereliction.

Elements of the Gothic, then, exist variously across videogame cultures: in the uncanny photorealism of sports-game avatars whose appearance mirrors the visual

characteristics and physical capabilities of real-world celebrities; in the exaggerated physics and excessive spectacle of driving games where crashes are replayed in fetishistic slow motion; in the cycle of death and rebirth which constitutes the majority of videogame play. The “natural images, architectural ruins, and courtly customs” which Botting observes in his consideration of the Gothic sublime aesthetic (Botting 2004: 278) are part of videogaming’s visual repertoire. Platform games like *Prince of Persia* (1989–) frequently take ruined architectural spaces as their setting, a collapsed temple with its fractured balconies, broken columns and incomplete stairways providing the perfect challenge for players to navigate. Discussing the sprawling online environment of *World of Warcraft* (1994–), Tanya Krzywinska identifies in the Night Elf homelands “ruins of once splendid temples and cities . . . in memoriam signifiers of past glory, representing in romanticized terms a lost object of desire” (2008: 130–31). In *Shadow of the Colossus* (2006), the player explores a mournful yet picturesque landscape, a vast, deserted space scattered with ruined temples, overgrown gardens and abandoned fortresses through which he or she moves in a quest to restore the life of a young woman. Devoid of human characters, the only beings encountered by the player are a series of immense creatures whose awe-inspiring size – together with the impressive technical skill inherent in their realization – is implied in the dramatic cinematic cut-scenes which introduce each battle following the monsters’ location. If there is something distinctly Gothic about the videogame as a medium, this becomes more evident in games which explicitly adopt Gothic narrative themes or aesthetics as their point of departure.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF (GOTHIC) HORROR

The protagonist of Capcom’s successful *Devil May Cry* (2001–) franchise is Dante: part-human, part-demon, a private detective and rogue monster-hunter. Levels in this series are notable for their elaborate and highly Gothic settings – castles, cathedrals, mansions – introduced through extravagant cut-scenes which revel in the spectacle of these virtual spaces and seem designed to evoke an experience of the sublime. Adversaries across the games include animated marionettes, giant spiders, golems and winged serpents. In addition to such narrative and visual elements, there is something distinctly Gothic in the excessive and extravagant gameplay. This involves pummeling joystick buttons in a series of sequences designed to make Dante perform increasingly elaborate moves, or combos, on the creatures which attack him. Armed with a sword and twin revolvers, Dante can suspend himself in mid-fall by repeatedly shooting his guns, fling enemies into the air, slicing them as they land, and leap from wall to wall. Depending on the sustained ferocity of the player’s performance, the words “cool!” “brutal!” and “showtime!” appear on the screen, or, if the swordplay is particularly lackluster, “dull!” The accompanying heavy-rock soundtrack is quite at odds with the game’s medieval Gothic aesthetic, and yet quite compatible with its overblown Gothic sensibility.

Dead Space (2008) is set in a derelict spaceship where the entire crew has been murdered or mutated into terrifying monsters. With “strategic dismemberment” being a key theme of the game’s development, gameplay involves shooting the limbs from these gangly “necromorphs” as they lope, crawl or charge toward the player, using a series of mining tools scattered throughout the ship. The backstory

uncovered throughout play is one involving an obscure religious object, an alien virus which reanimates human corpses, mass hysteria and insanity. While this narrative, unfolding within a dark shadowy gamespace littered with dead bodies and dismembered limbs, combines many thematic elements of Gothic fiction, the means by which the story is uncovered has further parallels with the mode. Illustrative of what Henry Jenkins calls “embedded narrative” (2004: 126), details are revealed through fragments: audio and video logs, text reports and details of the environment. Just as Gothic stories are frequently pieced together from diaries, letters and manuscripts, so the story of the *Ishimura* mining ship is determined by the player from a patchwork of documents. A similar storytelling technique is employed by the first person shooter *Bioshock* (2007), set in the underwater city of Rapture, where players collect audio recordings left by the city’s former and remaining residents. These tell the story of a utopian city established by a megalomaniac entrepreneur, which collapsed into decadence, class division and civil warfare. Like the audio recordings the player discovers, the space of the leaking city is a reflection of events preceding its fall into anarchy. Peeling posters advertise dehumanizing surgical procedures, grizzly shrines have been erected to Rapture cults, bloody graffiti expresses deranged sentiments of hysterical survivors. Even the genetically modified Rapture residents who patrol the space, dressed in party masks, commemorate the 1959 New Year celebrations which marked the turning point in the city’s fortunes. The history of Rapture is expressed through these fragments, embedded in the architecture and inhabitants of the place. If the Gothic, as Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith suggest, constitutes “the perfect anonymous language for the peculiar unwillingness of the past to go away” (Sage and Lloyd-Smith 1996: 4), then the storytelling technique of embedded narratives which inscribes past events on objects, spaces and characters seems extremely fitting for the mode. Furthermore, the game culminates in a narrative twist which throws into question the free will and self-determination of the protagonist throughout the game, provided with more resonance given the player’s interactive role in seemingly choosing their actions. In this, the hero is revealed to be a tragic Gothic figure, controlled and manipulated by unseen forces, the ironic foreshadowing of which, in the form of tattooed chains on the protagonist’s wrists, has been visible throughout the game.

While Gothic resonances might be identified across horror videogames, such aspects become increasingly evident in those known as “survival horror.” Within the field of videogame scholarship this sub-genre of videogame has attracted a high level of critical attention, reflected in the range of academic and popular definitions of the cycle. In its purest form, survival horror combines a range of aesthetic, narrative and gameplay characteristics, some clearly paralleling and reflecting the themes of Gothic fiction, others representing translations of Gothic tropes in a manner specific to the videogame form. These games have been succinctly defined as those in which “the player controls a character who has to get out of some enclosed place solving puzzles and destroying horrific monsters along the way” (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith and Tosca 2008: 184). Examples include such series as *Resident Evil* (1996–), *Silent Hill* (1999–), *Clock Tower* (1995–), *Fatal Frame* (2001–), *Forbidden Siren* (2004–) and *The Suffering* (2004). The term was first coined in the original *Resident Evil* game, which opened with the warning, “Welcome to the world of survival horror.” In a move that is indicative of the imperfect nature of all generic definitions and

historicization, Capcom's original, like its subsequent sequels, not only fails to conform to many of the accepted qualities of the genre, but also excludes previous games, such as *Sweet Home* (1989) and *Alone in the Dark* (1992), which critics have identified as retrospectively belonging to this cycle.

These games' locations are notably consistent with those of Gothic fiction. *Fatal Frame* (2001) takes place in a haunted house where the heroine, armed only with a supernatural camera, must take photographs that capture and disperse vengeful spirits' psychic energy. In *Haunting Ground* (2005), the heroine must find her way out of a large castle, patrolled by a maniacal hunchback caretaker, a deranged cyborg housemaid and a mad monk. *Clock Tower 3* (2003) features a gloomy house, a deserted concert hall, a graveyard, a hospital, and the eponymous clock tower, as well as the heroine's spooky family home. The setting of *The Suffering* is a prison which the convicted protagonist must escape, doing battle with various grotesque creatures representing types of capital punishment – hanging, firing squad, death by lethal injection – suffered by previous inmates. Laurie N. Taylor (2009) uses the term “ludic-Gothic” to describe processes at work within such games. Like the Gothic itself, survival horror is a hybrid genre, combining, as Taylor observes, adventure, action and horror game elements. Critical of authors who consider only the audio-visual aspects of videogames, Taylor argues that while the “horror” element refers to the narrative or aesthetic qualities, the “survival” component refers crucially to the particular form of gameplay that these titles employ. This entails “limited ammunition and the need to run from enemies, forced backtracking over the same areas in new game contexts, and limited carrying space” (Taylor 2009: 50). The first of these elements seems crucial in placing the emphasis on “surviving instead of thriving” (Taylor 2009: 46). Hence, the protagonists of these games tend to be unremarkable individuals with no particular skills, powers or supernatural abilities, trapped in environments crawling with monstrous creatures from which they must escape. Typically the heroes and heroines of survival horror are poorly equipped to deal with the horrors they encounter, having to rely on makeshift weapons, limited ammunition and the less confrontational strategy of running away and hiding. Simon Niedenthal (2009) identifies player vulnerability as a core component of the survival horror genre. Resulting in a painstaking and often stressful gaming experience, survival horror games produce the same “dialectic of persecution” which David Punter identifies in Gothic literature (1996), while the enclosed space of survival horror games, be it a castle, prison or subterranean maze, evokes the Gothic sense of being buried alive.

Other generic components include restrictive camera angles which make navigation of the gameworld particularly tricky, counter-intuitive control mechanics which subvert gaming conventions, and the disruption of the relationship between gamer and game (Taylor 2009: 51–52). The abrupt jumps in perspective involved in exploring *Resident Evil's* Raccoon City, the sanity meter of *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem* (2002) (which causes players to share protagonist's fear-induced hallucinations), and the “panic mode” of *Haunting Ground* (where the avatar, if scared by too-close an encounter with one of the many monstrous antagonists, runs erratically, knocking into walls and stumbling down stairs), are all examples of how, unlike other games which “try to ease players into a level of mastery or control,” survival horror games “attempt to prevent mastery following the traditions of the

Gothic to increase the power of horror” (Taylor 2009: 52). Other aspects of Gothic fiction incorporated into survival horror structures include the textual fragments through which Gothic and game stories are constructed, the sense of lost histories uncovered through paintings, sculptures and letters uncovered by survival horror heroes and heroines, and the presence of anachronistic media technologies – *Silent Hill*’s radio, *Fatal Frame*’s camera, *Resident Evil*’s typewriter – which foreground a preoccupation with language, representation, and textuality within both literary and videogame genres. Niedenthal observes the emphasis on puzzle-solving in survival horror videogames and Gothic literature (Niedenthal 2009: 170). Puzzles in these games are typically arcane, involving such artifacts as grandfather clocks, revolving stone statues, the manipulation of creaking mechanical devices, and the location of numerous keys to open various mysterious locked doors. Although often taking place in the present day, there is a sense of Stern’s neo-medievalism in these games’ settings and aesthetics; consistent with the traditional Gothic, they are accompanied by the presence of magical or supernatural elements. Distinguishable from more frenetic horror games, such as the first person shooter *Quake* (1996), the lightgun game *House of the Dead* (1996), or the comical tower defense game *Plants vs Zombies* (2009), which simply incorporate horror aesthetics into pre-existing videogame genres, survival horror produces a sense of anxiety, disquiet, tension and fear, leading Bernard Perron to suggest “these kinds of games would be more aptly called survival *terror*” (Perron 2004). It is this distinction between horror and terror which locates the gameplay and experience of these games in the realm of the Gothic.

SHATTERED STORIES, SHATTERED SPACES, SHATTERED PSYCHES: *SILENT HILL*

A game series which clearly exemplifies the Gothic nature of survival horror videogames is Konami’s long running franchise *Silent Hill*. A recurring title in academic and popular discussions of the sub-genre, the series, in its narrative structure, gameplay and themes, underlines the relationship between the videogame form and a particularly contemporary version of the Gothic. The story of this game, unfolding unevenly across several titles, is a distinctly Gothic one. In the small American town of Silent Hill, a young girl named Alessa Gillespie is brought into being by an ancient cult, and is destined to become the vessel for the order’s dark god. As she matures, Alessa starts to exhibit strange powers, eventually rebelling against the cult and refusing to do their bidding. In anger at the young girl’s defiance, her adoptive mother, Dalia, sets fire to the family home in an attempt to burn her alive, destroying part of the town in the process. Faced with death, Alessa uses her mystical powers to split herself. Part of her is reborn as an infant found at a roadside by a childless couple, while the rest continues to live in a burned and blackened body that refuses to die, kept in the basement of the local hospital.

This story of secret societies, bizarre religions, abusive families and split personalities also exhibits, in typically Gothic form, an ambiguous, inconsistent and fragmented structure. Not only are the details of *Silent Hill*’s story told, in traditional survival horror style, through a combination of game spaces, found objects, documents, paintings and inscriptions, but the narrative unfolds across different titles, in different ways, following different protagonists. Unlike many game franchises in

which the main character is consistent across sequels, each installment of *Silent Hill* features a different playable character at its center. The hero of the first game, set some years after the events described above, is Harry Mason, the man who found Alessa's infant split self, and whose adopted daughter, Cheryl, is trying to unite with her other half. *Silent Hill 3* (2003) centers on Heather, a further splitting of Alessa, who comes to the town to avenge her father's death at the hands of the religious cult. *Silent Hill: Origins* (2007) starts with truck driver Travis rescuing the young Alessa from her burning home. In some games, such as *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* (2009), the story being told seems radically inconsistent with the rest of the games, while in others, such as *Silent Hill 2* (2002) or *Silent Hill: Homecoming* (2008), events are only tangentially related to this master narrative. The presence of multiple endings is central to this ambiguity. Some conclusions to the first game have Harry leaving with an infant – the protagonist of *Silent Hill 3* – while others have him leave alone, a conclusion which precludes events in the third sequel. Another more dramatic ending sees Harry dead at the wheel of his car, suggesting the entire game, and presumably each subsequent installment, is a posthumous hallucination. Multiple endings in videogames traditionally all tell a single story consistent with the historical events unfolding within the diagesis of the gamespace. In *Silent Hill*, different endings draw radically different conclusions concerning the events of the town. Throughout the franchise, the exact nature of Silent Hill, the reason that the town is all but deserted, full of grotesque monsters and haunted by events from the past, is never entirely made clear. This ambivalence, along with the disjointed, multi-narrative, multi-perspectival way in which its narrative unfolds, makes *Silent Hill* an extremely Gothic text.

With few exceptions, the *Silent Hill* games exhibit all the characteristics of classic survival horror. Protagonists are ordinary people – a journalist, a truck driver, a teenage girl – forced to battle grotesque creatures armed with wooden planks, spanners, bottles and other improvised weaponry. Puzzles are typically baroque or grotesque – arranging hospital gurneys, organizing fairytale music boxes, placing masks on corpses – while locations across the series include hospitals, prisons, a graveyard, a corrupted funfair and an insane asylum. The sense of entrapment is also palpably felt in *Silent Hill*. Traditionally, play starts with the discovery of a map showing the extensive streets of the town. Soon after exploration begins, players become aware that their movement is restricted by barriers and broken roads, resulting in the various routes around Silent Hill being crossed out on the map. Eventually, a single pathway through the space is all that remains, inevitably leading to the entrance of one of Silent Hill's unpleasant residential areas, businesses or public buildings. This Gothic sense of unseen supernatural forces working to manipulate the protagonist is brutally underlined in the opening moments of the *Silent Hill* franchise. The first game starts with the protagonist waking behind the wheel of his crashed car. The player then controls Harry around a small section of the town, guided by fleeting images of his lost daughter running away into the fog. Night suddenly falls and he finds himself locked in a dead alleyway. Throughout this level, the player is pulled in a single direction, unable to deviate from the direction of Cheryl's flight. Once trapped, the protagonist is immediately surrounded by shuffling monsters and, armed only with a lit match, is abruptly slain; the character then wakes as if from a dream, lying in a Silent Hill diner, and the "real" game begins.

This particularly shocking start to the videogame underlines the confusion between reality and fantasy, waking and dreaming, sanity and madness that permeates the series and the spaces it features.

This blurring is exemplified by the Otherworld which periodically intrudes into the gamespace, often heralded by the sound of sirens, transforming the town into a grotesque doppelgänger of itself. This is a place of darkness and dereliction, where walls and floors appear smeared with blood and excrement, architecture dissolves into rusty grills and rotating fan blades, corridors are filled with soiled mattresses, discarded medical equipment and upturned wheelchairs. This is the world of “dehumanised environments, machinic doubles and violent, psychotic fragmentation,” all of which, for Botting, reflects a further homology between the postmodern and the Gothic (Botting 1999: 157). A common reading of the series is that the Otherworld represents a physical expression of mystical Alessa’s turmoil, contaminating the spaces of Silent Hill with images inspired by her incarceration as she lies in agony in the basement of the Alchemella Hospital. Characteristic of the obscurity that Niedenthal observes in Gothic videogames, Otherworld spaces are both visually obscured – frequently cloaked in darkness beyond the protagonist’s flashlight – and ontologically obscure, a profound ambivalence surrounding their nature or origin. Across the *Silent Hill* series the Otherworld frequently reflects the psychology of the protagonist, to the point where, as Marc C. Santos and Sarah E. White demonstrate, it is unclear whether the grotesque worlds the player negotiates are the result of supernatural forces or the character’s own psychosis (Santos and White 2005). In *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* the Otherworld is characterized by ice, suggesting the protagonist’s sense of being frozen in the past. In the alternative hospital level of *Silent Hill 3*, in a literal rendering of Skirrow’s claims concerning videogame spaces, the walls pulse a womb-like, bloody red, signifying the heroine’s journey toward her mother. In *Silent Hill 2* a hotel level alternates between the building as remembered by the protagonist from a past visit, and its actual state as a derelict site.

While survival horror videogames reflect many characteristics of the Gothic, *Silent Hill* bears many parallels with a particularly American Gothic sensibility. Although Japanese in origin, the series is clearly informed by American horror culture, something self-reflexively evident in the naming of Silent Hill streets after American horror and suspense writers. Significantly, the traumatic historical event around which the series circulates is one of child abuse, reflecting what Lucie Armitt sees as a recurring theme in Gothic fiction in the latter decades of the twentieth century: concerns surrounding perceived threats to children (Armitt 2011: 3). *Silent Hill* also embodies what Bernice M. Murphy calls “the suburban Gothic”: fiction which reflects and vindicates “the niggling suspicion that something dark lurks below suburbia’s peaceful facade” (Murphy 2009: 1). Before it transforms, Silent Hill is all white picket fences, well-kept lawns, diners and burger bars. In his consideration of a nationally specific articulation of Gothic themes, Eric Savoy identifies a literary tradition which “expresses a profound anxiety about historical crimes . . . that cast their shadow over what many would like to be the sunny American republic” (Savoy 2004: 168). This is the darkness which consumes the seemingly banal town of Silent Hill in its transformation by the Otherworld, while Alessa is the embodiment of the return of a ghostly, uncanny repressed which, as Savoy in his psychoanalytically-informed reading argues, haunts the pages of American Gothic

fiction. The traumatic historical Real, both attractive and repulsive, entailing a simultaneous desire to know and a flight from that knowledge, is symbolized by the “monstrous history” of Alessa’s abuse, the horrific nature of which can only unfold in a fragmented, non-linear, indirect manner, via characters not directly related to the girl and her story. In line with Savoy’s claims that American Gothic writers critiqued notions of America as “land of the free” through narratives in which protagonists find themselves compelled to repeat the mistakes of the past, *Silent Hill*, the quintessential small American town, controls the movement of the player through roads ripped apart by unseen forces, with corridors blocked with rusted hospital machinery, and spatial organization which draws players toward psychologically significant buildings, rooms and spaces. The transformative power of the Otherworld irrupts like a primeval irrational force, symbolizing the abuses suffered by the young girl Alessa, *Silent Hill*’s tragic mad woman in the basement.

REFERENCES

- Armitt, L. (2011) *Twentieth-Century Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Becker, S. (1999) *Gothic Forms of Feminine Fictions*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Botting, F. (1999) *Gothic*. London: Routledge.
- (2004) “AfterGothic: Consumption, Machines, and Black Holes,” in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 277–300.
- Crawford, G. and Rutter, J. (2006) “Digital Games and Cultural Studies,” in J. Rutter and J. Bryce (eds) *Understanding Digital Games*, London: Sage, 148–65.
- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith, J.H., and Tosca, S.P. (2008) *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*, London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, H. (2004) “Game Design as Narrative Architecture,” in N. Wardrip-Fruin and P. Harrigan (eds) *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, London: MIT Press, 118–30.
- Johnson, B. (2006) “The writing is on the wall: computer games rot the brain,” *Telegraph*, December 28. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3635699/The-writing-is-on-the-wall-computer-games-rot-the-brain.html>> (accessed November 21, 2012).
- Krzywinska, T. (2008) “World Creation and Lore: *World of Warcraft* As Rich Text,” in H.G. Comeliussen and J.W. Rettberg (eds) *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader*, London: MIT Press, 123–41.
- Lloyd-Smith, A. (1996) “Postmodernism/Gothicism,” in V. Sage and A. Lloyd Smith (eds) *Modern Gothic: A Reader*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 7–19.
- Murphy, B.M. (2009) *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Newman, J. (2008) *Playing With Videogame*, London: Routledge.
- Niedenthal, S. (2009) “Patterns of Obscurity: Gothic Setting and Light in *Resident Evil 4* and *Silent Hill 2*,” in B. Perron (ed.) *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*, London: McFarland, 168–79.
- Perron, B. (2004) “Sign of a Threat: The Effects of Warning Systems in Survival Horror Games.” Online. Available HTTP: <http://ludicine.ca/sites/ludicine.ca/files/Perron_Cosign_2004.pdf> (accessed September 29, 2012).
- Punter, D. (1996) *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1: The Gothic Tradition*, London: Longman.

- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2006) *The Gothic*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rouse III, R. (2009) "Match Made in Hell: The Inevitable Success of the Horror Genre in Video Games," in B. Perron (ed.) *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*, London: McFarland, 15–25.
- Sage, V. and Lloyd-Smith, A. (1996) "Introduction," in V. Sage and A. Lloyd-Smith (eds) *Modern Gothic: A Reader*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1–5.
- Santos, M.C. and White, S.E. (2005) "Playing with Ourselves: A Psychoanalytic Investigation of *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*," in N. Garrelts (ed.) *Digital Gameplay: Essays on the Nexus of Game and Gamer*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 69–79.
- Savoy, E. (2004) "The Rise of American Gothic," in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 167–88.
- Skirrow, G. (1986) "Hellivision: An Analysis of Video Games," in C. MacCabe (ed.) *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 115–42.
- Smith, A. (2007) *Gothic Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Spooner, C. (2007) "Gothic Media," in C. Spooner and E. McEvoy (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, London: Routledge 195–97.
- Stern, E. (2002) "A Touch of the Medieval: Narrative, Magic, and Computer Technology in Massively Multiplayer Computer Role-Playing Games," in F. Mayra (ed.) *Computer Games and Digital Cultures: Conference Proceedings*, Tampere: Tampere University Press. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.eddostern.com/texts/Stern_TOME.html> (accessed September 29, 2012).
- Taylor, L.N. (2009) "Gothic Bloodlines in Survival Horror Gaming," in B. Perron (ed.) *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*, London: McFarland, 46–61.

FURTHER READING

- Carr, D. (2006) "Space, Navigation and Affect," in D. Carr, *et al.* (eds) *Computer Games: Text, Narrative and Play*, Cambridge: Open University Press, 59–71. (An engaging exploration of the use of gamespace in generating horror affect.)
- Kirkland, E. (2009) "*Resident Evil*'s Typewriter: Survival Horror and its Remediations," *Games and Culture* 4.2: 115–26. (Discusses further the use of uncanny media in horror videogames.)
- King, G. and Krzywinska, T. (2002) *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, London: Wallflower Press. (A collection considering the relationship between games and cinema, notable particularly for Krzywinska's own "Hands-on horror" 206–23.)
- Whittaker, J. (2007) "Gothic and New Media," in C. Spooner and E. McEvoy (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, London: Routledge, 270–79. (Presents an engaging argument for the Gothic nature of new media reading practices.)

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

REWRITING THE CANON IN CONTEMPORARY GOTHIC



Joanne Watkiss

As Franz Potter has argued, the act of recycling has been integral to the Gothic mode since its emergence in the eighteenth century (Potter 2005: 8). Flying flagrantly in the face of the Romantic discourse on original genius, early writers of the Gothic often gave themselves over to the tireless reworking of set themes, characters and scenarios, to the extent that, for its detractors, the Gothic became a hackneyed, clichéd and thoroughly overworked mode. In modern and contemporary culture, this tendency to rewrite and recycle other texts has remained a consistent feature of the form: several recent Gothic productions, too, seem parasitically to feed off and plagiarize one another, uncannily echoing and repeating certain familiar characters, themes and plot-lines across a variety of texts and media. At least in part, this process would appear to be driven by the general postmodern assault upon notions of origin and originality, pervasive theoretical reservations rendered all the more acute by the already thoroughly intertextual nature of Gothic writing itself. This chapter explores the contemporary rewrites of three canonical Victorian Gothic fictions, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), in Will Self's *Dorian: An Imitation* (2002), John Marks's *Fangland* (2007), and John Harding's *Florence and Giles* (2010) respectively, demonstrating the extent to which the act of rewriting in the contemporary Gothic is based upon the productive alignment of different historical contexts and locations, an alignment that suggests not so much the timelessness of Gothic as the creative, engineering forces of historical process and change.

Will Self's *Dorian* maintains the metropolitan setting of Wilde's novel, but temporally updates the narrative to the 1980s and 1990s. In keeping with the original, Self presents a Dorian whose immoral behavior is both hidden and displayed upon a screen; in place of a painting, this contemporary text projects Dorian's alternative self onto a series of monitors as part of a video installation art-piece known as *Cathode Narcissus*. In much the same way that Wilde's novella is concerned with the contagion of immorality, so Self explores the disease that became somewhat problematically synonymous with homosexuality, as knowledge of the HIV virus developed in the early 1990s. In doing so, Self is keen to explore the cultural superimpositioning of the AIDS epidemic with a particular lifestyle choice: homosexuality

and drug use. John Marks's *Fangland* reworks *Dracula* through both location and historical framework, having his characters occupy contemporary America. In place of a foreign threat entering Britain, the vampire in Marks's fiction, patently in response to such political crises as the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, is depicted as a terrorist entering the US. John Harding's *Florence and Giles* shifts James's *The Turn of the Screw* from an English setting to an American one, while remaining faithful to the original by setting his text in 1891.

In transposing Wilde's narrative onto London metropolitan culture of the 1980s and 1990s, Will Self's *Dorian* parallels the Victorian *fin de siècle* with the end of the twentieth century, Henry's home serving as a symbol of the supposedly "Victorian values" of Thatcher's Britain:

such was the particular correspondence between the year our story begins, 1981, and the year of the house's construction, 1881, and such was the peculiarly similar character of the times – a Government at once regressive and progressive, a monarchy mired in its own immemorial succession crisis, an economic recession both sharp and bitter.

(Self 2002: 3)

Recalling the social conditions of the 1890s, Self stresses the class divisions that underscore society, mirrored by the decline of the monarchy as an institution. In *Dorian*, it is the decadence of an outdated upper class that is the predatory Gothic presence, a presence exemplified and embodied by the character of Henry Wotton. His sartorial choices are especially revealing:

His immaculately-cut three-piece Prince of Wales-check suit bagged slightly at the knee; his off-white butterfly-collar linen shirt frayed a tad at the cuff and the link holes; his red knitted silk tie was casually knotted . . . but only a slice of this costume was on view.

(Self 2002: 4)

As in earlier Gothic fictions, the upper-class gentleman is determined by the performance of excess, as one who is somewhat "swaddled" in his class. Dressed in his checked suit, Henry is symbolic of a decadent, ageing class, not unlike the monarchy itself. The same could be said of Henry's wife, Batface, who is also rendered as a ridiculous caricature of outdated aristocratic values: "she was so irrefutably aristocratic that she was allowed to do almost anything – short of pissing herself – while remaining altogether acceptable" (Self 2002: 5). The upper-class refusal to regulate its idiosyncrasies is suggestive of that class's transgressive values more generally, and, as such, their actions seem to escape policing. As in Wilde's text, such a hedonistic lifestyle without limits is exposed as corruptive and damaging through the figure of *Dorian*.

Such class distinctions become evident when violence emerges on the streets, as rioters protest against government cuts of the 1980s. Self's novel records these events from a position of privilege, serving to reinforce the separate spheres of upper and working class as it does so: "When [Henry] depressed a button on the car radio he recoiled from a blast of pure, stentorian, ordinary news. Information concerning a

parallel world in which people walked and talked brawled and died” (Self 2002: 8). Collisions between these worlds, Self seems to suggest, result only in violence. Although Henry’s mother attempts to help the underprivileged with her charity organization, the Youth Homeless Project, the venue is “the restaurant of a cavernous hotel which had grown seedy and unprofitable in the recession” (Self 2002: 29). Such a site only reinforces the very class distinctions that her organization aims to traverse. The charity event initiates Dorian’s meeting with Herman, a black drug addict whose addiction is funded by Dorian and his friends in exchange for sex:

so it was that Dorian learned the facts about his bit of rough, and they only endeared Herman to him the more. After Helen and Oxford and sub-flapper dresses and japes and diving off bridges in the May morn and sucking dicks under dining society tables and all of *that*. This . . . this . . . he figured was life as it *must* be lived . . . To have said “room” would’ve been to dignify it, would’ve been to assume a recognisable floor, walls and ceiling in place of this peculiar, upended shoebox . . . Filthy clothes, rotting banana skins, used syringes, stale crusts of bread.

(Self 2002: 47–48)

Dorian’s attraction to Herman is borne in the alternative that he offers to the world of the upper classes. He is only attractive in the difference that he stages, operating, as he does, as a marker against which Dorian and the upper classes might define themselves. He thus becomes a commodity to purchase as he buys into the lifestyle of the poor: “Herman was so beautifully suitable for patronising, like a buggered-up personification of Third World debt” (Self 2002: 49). As the subtitle of the novel suggests, Dorian imitates Herman’s life, parasitically feeding off his lifestyle in a vampiric manner. Self portrays the aristocracy much like Polidori’s Lord Ruthven in *The Vampyre* (1819): as manipulative parasites whose appearance permits them entry into any home and any lifestyle. Dorian preys upon an impoverished figure, like the character of Sibyl Vane in Wilde’s novel, with destructive consequences. In paying Herman for sex with drugs, Dorian is the “sugar daddy” (Self 2002: 48) from whom Herman effectively buys his own death. Herman’s position as a “black Rapunzel” (Self 2002: 58) suggests the vulnerability of his position, as well as his desire to be rescued. Instead of receiving help, his habit is funded, and like Sibyl, he commits suicide. His diseased body in the novel thus becomes symbolic of the infectious effects of a decadent upper class:

they were all awesomely high . . . it was a strange blending of the essences of the five men. One cubic centimetre out of that arm and another into this arm, arm upon arm upon arm, black upon white upon brown, while the transparent proboscis probed.

(Self 2002: 68)

By sharing needles, HIV is passed around the group; except for the untouchable Dorian, all are infected. Instead, he functions as the needle itself: while remaining healthy, he is the host for the disease. As Baz observes, “it’s Dorian who is the true retrovirus. Because throughout everything, his true self has remained inviolate” (Self

2002: 108). In preserving a hidden self whose screen absorbs all the consequences of his behavior, Dorian becomes a vehicle of transmission, a host for viruses, without being infected himself: “Dorian’s visage is an Etch-a-Sketch; no smear of dissipation or leer of venality – let alone marks of ageing – remains upon it for long” (Self 2002: 128). As a carrier, Dorian’s body is rendered inviolate as the recordings of *Cathode Narcissus* become diseased instead: “it was even rumoured that Dorian was the AIDS Mary, the malevolent and intentional transmitter of the virus” (Self 2002: 112). Henry, by contrast, is not so lucky. Infected with HIV that rapidly develops into AIDS, he poignantly asserts that “I feel gothic with disease” (Self 2002: 236). Such metaphors of disease are evident throughout the text, suggesting the corruption and decay of the upper class as an institution, a reflection of both nineteenth- and twentieth-century *fin-de-siècle* anxieties concerning decadent, hedonistic lifestyles. As Henry wryly observes to Dorian, “the poor may take an occasional cheap day return to oblivion, but only the rich may maintain a villa there” (Self 2002: 59). The sense that time is running out for the aristocracy is suggested through the disease that ravages Henry’s body, and his death is counted down by the “jiggling man” whose swaying Henry obsessively watches from his home.

The world of art in Self’s text is similarly aligned with the decadence of a privileged upper class. As a work of art himself, Dorian is filmed and cast onto nine monitors in the video installation piece, *Cathode Narcissus*: “it showed the naked figure of a beautiful young man, posed like a classic Greek kouros: one hand lightly on hip, the other trailing in groin, half-smile on plump lips” (Self 2002: 12). Dorian’s beauty becomes commodified as a work of art. As in Wilde’s narrative, however, this work of art decays as Dorian’s behavior becomes increasingly immoral. Such immorality is defined by Self in terms of compulsive sexual behavior, violent acts such as murder and rape, and repeated, excessive drug use. In marked contrast to the older characters in the text, Dorian, we are told, enjoyed “a real efflorescence” during the late 1980s: “You have to hand it to our Dorian, Baz,” Wotton observes, “he threw on the sweaty threads of contemporaneity with his usual casualness” (Self 2002: 127). Dorian’s existence within late-twentieth-century society is predicated solely upon clothing and personal appearance, forms of superficiality that are, of course, indicative of the shallow morals that comprise his character. His objectification as an image, however, has dangerous consequences:

Inside the dark studio the nine monitors were sharply outlined. Across their faces, hissing with static, the fluid images of Dorian presented a cascade of motion. There was a soundtrack as well, an insistent thrumming beat entwined with a breathy fluting. Dorian was transfixed for a few moments, but then he moved closer and began to sway in time with his own televisual images.

(Self 2002: 22)

Dorian falls in love with his own image, the uncanny “soundtrack” to which suggests that the installation itself has come to life. As with many of these contemporary rewrites of older fictions, technology itself takes on a distinctly Gothic quality in its ability to project an alternative self to the subject. As in Wilde’s text, Dorian remains preoccupied with youth and vitality: “So these” – Dorian gestured – “will remain young for ever, while I grow old, then die?” (Self 2002: 22). The twentieth-century

equivalent of a painting is a video installation, a medium that permits movement and sound, and thus the image of Dorian in Self's text becomes a breathing, animated one: "it may be art for you, Baz, but for me it's . . . it's an alternative me. I said it when I first saw him – I'm jealous of myself" (Self 2002: 51). True to Gothic form, the horror of doubling is made apparent through the medium of technology. The video installation becomes altogether monstrous as Dorian's behavior is only registered at the level of the image but not on his physical body.

The endless supplies of funds and connections of the wealthy classes facilitate and permit the decadence of Dorian's lifestyle. In accordance with the proscription of aristocratic luxury in earlier Gothic fiction, *Dorian* suggests the danger of a high-flying lifestyle in which money permits and licenses transgressive, even anti-social behavior:

it's *Cathode Narcissus* that has aged and suffered, while I remain pristine. Look at me, Baz, look at me! I'm thirty-one years old. I've fucked hundreds of men and women – thousands, even. I've never used a condom in my life. Some nights I've taken it in the arse from twenty heavy-hitters. I've never stinted myself on booze or drugs, never. I take what I want when I want it. Yet I bear no marks.
(Self 2002: 162)

The effects of such decadence becomes wholly apparent when Dorian shows Baz the monitors: "an anguished figure, his face, neck and hands covered with Kaposi's, his mouth wet with bile, his eyes tortured by death and madness, his bald pate erupting with some vile fungus" (Self 2002: 163). The image becomes symbolic of the corrosive excesses of the moneyed class's lifestyle. As the narrative voice observes, their behavior strongly recalls the decadence of late-nineteenth-century society: "so what if the whole giddy rondo had the air of the *fin de siècle* about it?" (Self 2002: 267).

Self's narrative concludes in 1995 to mark the shift of government as New Labour moved into power:

it seemed that at long last the world spirit of stylishness – so long absent from London – had decided to return. And waiting in the wings there was Tony Blair, a young, dynamic leader, ready to sweep Parliament bare of the stale, bloated and in some cases rotten Tories.

(Self 2002: 266)

The depiction of a decadent establishment in the text extends to the Conservative party, a privileged group of politicians and their supporters who are referred to throughout as stale and outdated, bloated and excessive, rotten and diseased. Despite an optimistic shift in government, the video installation persists as technology advances into the disembodied network that is the internet: "during the first few months of 1997, the cathode Narcissi spread throughout the virtual metabolism of the culture, like a digital virus . . . in May alone there were 2,456,707 hits on the *Cathode Narcissus* website" (Self 2002: 271). The omniscient presence of the internet functions as a host for the decadence of an upper-class lifestyle where the consequences of that lifestyle are diverted elsewhere. In Dorian's case, his behavior results in the deaths of those around him.

Just as *Dorian* rewrites Wilde's text into twentieth-century England, so John Marks's *Fangland* rewrites *Dracula* into a contemporary American setting. In itself, such a national and geographical shift suggests the decline of the British Empire and the emergence of America as an international force. The fundamental element of *Dracula* that Marks strategically reworks is the fear of invasion, a version of the "reverse colonization" to which Stoker's late-nineteenth-century fiction had given such graphic realization. In place of the threat of eastern Europe, fear takes as its object here the figure of the terrorist, the dangerous outsider who infiltrates the US from the East. Marks's text thus offers a powerful parallel between English colonial fears of the late nineteenth century and American anxieties around the terrorist threat to national and international security in the twenty-first. As in Stoker's text, emphasis falls upon international borders, most significantly, those crossed from East to West. In *Fangland*, Dracula becomes Torgu, a terrorist from eastern Europe, intent on infecting the West with the disease of vampirism. Like *Dracula*, it is the journey of a westerner into the East that initiates the narrative, although in *Fangland*, this journey is undertaken by a female protagonist, Evangeline Harker, whose name suggests a perverse inheritance of the Harker name. Like Mina, she is engaged to be married, but unlike Stoker's character, she enjoys a career as a journalist for a popular television news program, *The Hour*, and is sent eastward to interview Torgu. Her record of events is set alongside multiple perspectives through various media (email, newspaper reports, letters) in a clear inheritance of *Dracula*'s multi-layered narrative, described by Mina as a mass of typewriting composed from stenographs, diary entries, letters and newspaper reports. Through his host, Torgu is able to travel to Evangeline's hometown of New York, a site particularly sensitive to terrorist fears after the cataclysmic events of 9/11. Just as Jonathan is haunted by the textual record of his journey east, so Evangeline's body is indelibly marked with script, her mind altogether "infected" by Torgu's uncanny chanting of place names, and through which she will be initiated into a vampiric becoming. Like several other vampire narratives, Marks's text aligns the contaminative effects of vampirism with a disease. As Evangeline observes,

he is a form of terrorist; but his terror is strange. It's like a virus, and I have it. He gave it to me. It's most apparent when I lie still and close my eyes. He has put something terrible inside of me.

(Marks 2007: 82)

Colonizing Evangeline's body and New York office, Marks's Dracula threatens to spread his vampiric disease throughout America. As a terrorist, moreover, Torgu is an individual whose violent acts incite fear, an emotion that becomes infectious in itself.

Evangeline's mission to eastern Europe aims to locate the mythical figure of Ion Torgu. Like Jonathan Harker in relation to Dracula, Evangeline has business with Torgu, not least of all the promise that he will constitute the subject of a successful journalistic report. In her role as writer, Evangeline almost vampirically attempts to drain Torgu of a story. Her interest in him is governed solely by the potential he bears for journalistic description:

The first screening of the story for the executive producer, the chimerical Bob Rogers, would be a disaster. Torgu would be despised as a character. I could hear the criticism. We can't show this guy on American television. Look at his goddamn teeth. Look at his hair. He's a freak.

(Marks 2007: 48)

Ignoring the ethical concerns at stake in Torgu's criminality, Evangeline's apprehension relates to his appearance on television. Since he is displeasing to the eye, Evangeline renders him unsuitable for an interview: in a pointed critique of American media, what Torgu looks like becomes more important than the interview itself. In order to capture and write her story, she goads him into revealing information: "in these days after September 11, there are rumors that Islamic terrorist groups may be using crime figures like you to buy weapons and raise money" (Marks 2007: 45). As a potential supplier of funds for Islamic terrorism, Torgu is presented as an enemy of America; despite this, Evangeline's company is happy to pay him for his story. It is thus through Evangeline's news corporation that Torgu is permitted entry to the US, suggesting the parasitic nature of the media with the newsroom acting as a site of transmission. Information becomes infectious in and of itself, as Torgu enters America, infecting the staff in the newsroom with vampirism.

Having locked her in a room and restricted her access to a telephone, Torgu's intentions to use Evangeline as a means of entering the US are made manifest:

he produced a large square envelope stuffed with papers. He fished around in the paperwork, looking for something in particular. I saw the American seal on a consular document . . . Wordlessly, I watched, and I understood. He wanted me to help him to leave Romania and get to the United States . . . he placed papers on the table: airline tickets, typed itineraries, a passport.

(Marks 2007: 76)

This Dracula is an unwanted visitor, a guest whose arrival into the country will pose a threat to national security. He also demands her "email address, password and account number" (Marks 2007: 76) in order to communicate with those in the office in New York. As a disembodied technology, Torgu utilizes email to masquerade as Evangeline, a trusted US citizen, in order to ensure that a shipment from Romania arrives safely. As in Stoker's text, the vampire must coordinate the sending through of a series of crates to ensure his survival in the new territory. Recalling the earth-filled crates in *Dracula*, Torgu's crates are filled with blank videotapes sent to Evangeline's office through her friend, Stimson. Though the tapes are supposedly empty, the "vague whispery sounds" to be heard when they are played are the medium through which Torgu transmits his vampirism. As another employee of the company, Julia, notes, "the Romanian tapes were contaminated, somehow. Visually, the images reminded her of e-mails containing computer viruses" (Marks 2007: 148). Again, the twenty-first-century Dracula relies upon technology in order to make himself the host of others, first through email, then through the videotape. Primarily, though, Torgu's infectious influence is achieved through speech. In a perversion of her intended interview, Evangeline is forced to hear Torgu's story of trauma, the chanting of place names associated with unspeakable violence. On her

return to the US, she carries within her the disease that Torgu hopes to introduce into American society, the newsroom serving as an ideal site for transmission. That Torgu forces American citizens to hear the traumatic experiences of eastern Europe suggests a redefinition of trauma from an eastern perspective. Torgu's story, therefore, cannot be allowed to leave the newsroom. Thus, a researcher, Julia, decides to cause an explosion in the building. In a deliberate parallel of 9/11, the text ends with the destruction of a tower block in central New York. As in *Dracula*, the foreign threat posed by Torgu must be destroyed: in Marks's novel, the contemporary vampire is a terrorist whose words threaten to infect the nation with vampirism through the medium of the media itself. Gothic rewrites itself in the cultural spaces left gaping in the wake of deep cultural trauma.

Unlike the rewrites addressed above, *Florence and Giles*, John Harding's recasting of James's *The Turn of the Screw*, is not set in contemporary times; instead, Harding maintains the original temporal setting of the 1890s, but shifts its location from England to America. He also shifts the narrative perspective from the governess to Florence, or Flora as she is known in James's text, so that, instead of the governess fixating on the specters of Miss Jessel and Quint, Florence's attentions are directed toward her governess. Where the unnamed narrator in James's novel is fearful of the children possessing knowledge of the world of the supernatural – specters that are also symbolic of the scandal of a cross-class relationship – Harding shifts the focus back onto the governess herself, with Florence's suspicion that her governess, Miss Taylor, is of supernatural origin. As Florence remarks to Giles,

I am sure [Miss Taylor] is not who she pretends to be. I think she has come here for some evil purpose of her own. I am half convinced she isn't human, that she is some kind of being from the spirit world, some sort of ghost.

(Harding 2010: 115)

In *The Turn of the Screw*, it is primarily Miles who interacts with the governess, while Flora remains in the background. In *Florence and Giles*, however, Florence takes center-stage with a first person narration, while Giles occupies a secondary role. Florence is thus aligned with the governess of the original text; both are subject to delusions that destabilize the distinction between reality and fantasy. Harding draws immediate parallels with James's novel through Florence's description of her first governess:

the least said about Whitaker, the better, at least in her first incarnation. She was a silly young woman who stood and besotted before the portrait of my uncle on the stairs and twittered about how handsome he was and when he interviewed her he had seemed quite taken with her.

(Harding 2010: 71)

This is a clear reference to the governess's obsession with their uncle in *The Turn of the Screw*. As Florence states, "I saw through this straightway; it obviated our uncle, who had no time for us at all, could not be bothered to question the stupid woman" (Harding 2010: 72). And yet, she is susceptible to her own romantic fantasies involving father figures such as the policeman Hadleigh.

Throughout her narration, Florence writes in a language of her own, where nouns and adjectives become verbs, and verbs become nouns. Perhaps predictably, this playful form of textuality becomes the object of patriarchal restriction:

because of the strict views of my uncle regarding the education of females, I have hidden my eloquence, under-a-bushelled it, and kept any but the simplest forms of expression bridewelled within my brain . . . were I to speak as I think, it would be obvious I had been at the books and the library would be banned.

(Harding 2010: 5)

As of old, we are presented here with children whose parental figures are absent, although Florence's uncle retains a level of control that is missing in James's text. Her own language becomes a code for Florence to enable her secret to remain censored, a code that is only accessed through writing. Despite being forbidden to do so, Florence teaches herself to read. Like the governess in James's novella, it is the Gothic that provides particularly popular fare, as she admits to whiling away countless hours in her secret reading-place in the tower, devouring the works of writers such as Ann Radcliffe and Edgar Allan Poe. Many of her actions in the text correspond closely with the book that she is currently reading, encountering *Jane Eyre*, for instance, just before she locates cozy corners in which to read. Throughout the narrative, Florence somewhat self-reflexively describes herself in terms fitting of a Gothic heroine, and draws several parallels between herself and characters in novels: "I sat in bed, too terrified to move a muscle, indeed, unable to, like the man in 'The Premature Burial' by Edgar Allan Poe" (Harding 2010: 94). Florence determines her existence through the novels that she reads, building her sense of self through narrative. It is while "reading *The Monk*, making the hairs on my neck stand on end" (Harding 2010: 41), that she devises a plan to "pretend to nightwalk" (Harding 2010: 63) in order to spy on Miss Taylor's behavior during the night, a decision clearly modeled on Agnes's attempts in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) to escape parental oppression by pretending to sleepwalk and masquerading as a spirit in order to escape the house. As the text progresses, Florence begins to use characters' names as verbs, stating that "I had Dupinned it right!" (Harding 2010: 168) after stealing Miss Taylor's tickets to France. She also refers to herself as Shakespearean characters: "every day while I Hamleted about, paralysed by my fears" (Harding 2010: 161). Like Hamlet, Florence views herself as a heroic figure who must exact revenge, an impulse that is apparently gratified as she, like one of the children in the popular fairy tale, pushes Miss Taylor down a well: "I had Hansel and Gretel her with one magnificent blow" (Harding 2010: 234).

Like the narrator in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), Florence's existence is constrained within Blithe House, with very little social interaction beyond its walls. The patriarchal oppression she is subject to leads to her insanity and subsequent paranoia, her incessant "peopling" of the house with the ghosts of a phantom family (Harding 2010: 14). Left to her own devices, Florence's fantasies begin to overwhelm her, as the Gothic fictions she reads move outside of the page and form the basis of her psychotic conceptual world. Of course, the blurring of the fantasy–reality distinction is a conventional Gothic trope that runs prominently through James's text, but it is exaggerated in Harding's narrative through an

extended process of postmodern linguistic play. Florence's imagination descends into the realm of fantasy as she imagines her friend Theo to be with her when he physically is not: "I pretended he was [there] and imagined us face-to-facing, me on the chaise, he on the captain's chair, discussing my problem" (Harding 2010: 56). Florence also imagines herself as the housekeeper, Mrs Grouse: "feeling impish, I plumped myself down in her desk chair, thinking to experience what it might be like to be her" (Harding 2010: 59). Unlike the governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Florence is conscious of her own delusions, choosing to reveal a few to the reader while concealing others. Whether her governess, Miss Taylor, or the previous governess, Miss Whittaker (who died in suspicious circumstances), are supernatural in origin is again left for the reader to decide. Harding's text remains faithful to James's in the emphasis that he brings to bear upon the reader as an active participant in the interpretation of the ghostly.

Gothic rewrites, then, forge productive critical spaces in which to interrogate a range of contemporary concerns: class structures of Thatcherite Britain in Will Self's *Dorian*, and the threat of international terrorism in John Marks's *Fangland*. Of all the classic Gothic texts subject to such ceaseless retelling and recycling, it is arguably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* that has proved the most popular of source-texts: notable examples include Brian Aldiss's *Frankenstein Unbound* (1973); Fred Saberhagen's *The Frankenstein Papers* (1986); Spike Milligan's parodic *Frankenstein according to Spike Milligan* (1997); Dean Kootz's *Frankenstein* series (2004–12); Peter Ackroyd's *The Casebook of Victor Frankenstein* (2008); and Dave Zeltserman's *Monster: A Novel of Frankenstein* (2012). In each instance, Shelley's novel is rearticulated within a different historical context, bringing the Gothic into immediate dialogue with topical cultural concerns. Gothic rewrites thus permit navigation across different historical locations, exploiting the fluidity that is characteristic of the Gothic mode in general. As Joost de Bloois has pointed out, "gothic writing is rewriting . . . it means displacing, copying, redoubling, overwriting" (de Bloois 2007: 45). But as Katherine Dunn puts it, this ceaseless reiteration, more than simply sounding the postmodern death-knell of originality, is, and perhaps always has been, the rich well-spring of creativity within the Gothic itself: "repetition is also transformation, troped variously as decay, deformity and metamorphosis" (Dunn 2007: 19). In contemporary culture, Gothic writing is always an act of rewriting, and such productive mutation is, "like the gothic, always a double gesture" (Dunn 2007: 23).

REFERENCES

- Ackroyd, P. (2008) *The Casebook of Victor Frankenstein*, London: Chatto & Windus.
- de Bloois, Joost. (2007) "A Postscript to Transgression: The Gothic in George Bataille's Dissident Avant-Gardism," in I. van Elferen (ed.) *Nostalgia or Perversion? Gothic Rewriting from the Eighteenth Century Until the Present Day*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 44–59.
- Dunn, K.E. (2007) "Gothic's Double Gesture: Nostalgia, Perversion and Repetition in Gothic Rewritings," in I. van Elferen (ed.) *Nostalgia or Perversion? Gothic Rewriting from the Eighteenth Century Until the Present Day*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 12–25.

Harding, J. (2010) *Florence and Giles*, London: Blue Door.

James, H. (2011) *The Turn of the Screw*, 1898, London: Penguin.

Marks, J. (2007) *Fangland*, London: Vintage.

Potter, F. (2005) *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835: Exhuming the Trade*, London: Palgrave.

Self, W. (2002) *Dorian: An Imitation*, London: Penguin.

FURTHER READING

Matthews, Graham. (2012) “‘Evil is to Morality as Magnolia is to Paint’: Ethics and Aesthetics in Will Self’s *Dorian: An Imitation*,” in G. Matthews, *Ethics of Desire in the Wake of Postmodernism*, London: Continuum, 105–27. (An essay that explores postmodernism, ethics and art in *Dorian*.)

McGuinness, P. (2001) *Symbolism, Decadence and the Fin de Siècle*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press. (Provides contextual detail for the period of the *fin de siècle*.)

Yebra, José, M. (2011) “The Moving Lines of Neo-Baroque in Will Self’s *Dorian: An Imitation*,” *Atlantis* 33.1, 17–31. (Explores the New Baroque style in *Dorian* through the sublime, aesthetics and intertextuality.)

CHAPTER FORTY

GOTHIC TOURISM



Emma McEvoy

Berlin, May 2012: At the Brandenburg Gate, on Unter den Linden, stands an array of “crate slugs”: street theater characters. Two tall, handsome men, mounted on the aforesaid crates, work as a double act, playing a Soviet soldier and an American soldier. They are by far the most popular of the characters; tourists flock to be photographed standing between them. The actor-soldiers recall one aspect of the past of the Brandenburg Gate – its function as part of the divide between the former GDR and West Germany. By their very presence, they play out the conversion of the site into one of tourist consumption, offering a handshake which, captured in a photograph, will become a souvenir of contact with the site.

Berlin is a city filled with memorialization of its tumultuous past, and a place in constant debate about the nature of that memorialization. Just to the West of the Gate is the Platz des 18. März, renamed in 2000 to commemorate the events of the 1848 Revolution and the first democratic parliamentary elections in the GDR in 1990. A few minutes’ walk from the Brandenburg Gate is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Near there is the Checkpoint Charlie Museum. In a city so loaded with cultural significance and heavy with memory, the other wandering “statues” – Mickey Mouse and Freddy Krueger – strike a strange note. Mickey is not quite his usual jaunty self, and Freddy Krueger seems positively embarrassed. The discomfort of Freddy Krueger is revealing. It reflects his awareness of the fact that his presence is out-of-sync with modern-day sensibilities. The consensus (including the vote of Freddy himself) is that he should not be there, that his presence is unwelcome, both because of the history of Berlin and because of subsequent choices made in relation to the memorialization of these events. He undercuts the celebration of the victory of western capitalism, a celebration which for many inheres in these very acts of tourism themselves. Freddy here is either an empty sign or an unwilling symbol.

Gothic tourism is rarely as bald and unimaginative (not to mention misplaced) as the wandering Freddy Krueger at the Brandenburg Gate. It has proliferated in recent years and covers a range of practices. Some countries have very little (or nothing) in the way of Gothic tourism; other countries rely heavily on it. Inglis and Holmes point out that ghost tourism has been a part of the Scottish tourist industry for the

best part of 200 years and that “the spectral now figures as a crucial form of selling the country to a global audience” (Inglis and Holmes 2003: 56). Whereas Gothic tourism in Scotland raises few public debates apart from those on good taste, Gothic tourism elsewhere may be much more problematic. Dracula tourism in Romania, for instance, has sparked both lively cultural debate and political protest. The country’s official English language tourist guide, *Discover Romania*, seeks to minimize the Dracula phenomenon, and its reference to “Stocker [*sic*]” on page four is perhaps an example of a deliberate misspelling. Whereas the government brochure claims that “Stocker’s [*sic*] fictional work takes advantage of the complexity of the multiple aspects which define the Romanian identity,” many Romanians feel that Dracula tourism trivializes the country’s rich and complex history and displaces other attempts at constructing Romanian identity in the international world. As novelist Ioana Baetica complains in an article in the *New Internationalist*, “When wandering through Europe I am always astounded to learn what my fellow citizens in an ever more united continent know about Romania. First, Count Dracula” (Baetica 2004).

Duncan Light, discussing the history of Dracula tourism in Romania, points out that it has been contentious for the last 50 years. He notes that during the Communist era the tourist board was told to develop an American market for Americans, but found Dracula tourism problematic as it “focused attention on something that was the very antithesis of the socialist project” (Light 2007: 756). The national tourism office tried to counter fiction with history, launching a “Dracula: Legend and Truth” tour which operated until 1989 (Light 2007: 757). Dracula tourism in Romania is still a matter of contention: its accelerated pace is a cultural phenomenon which is not only a product of the country’s developing capitalist economy but which also expresses some of the problems associated with the new capitalist economics. The most celebrated recent battle over Dracula tourism took place over the projected Dracula Theme Park, described by Fred Botting as an example of “Disneygothic” (Botting 2008: 3). Plans were finally shelved in 2005 after wide-scale resistance from many quarters, including nationalists and environmentalists. As Light notes, “Dracula tourism can be identified as a site of struggle between the West’s assertion of Romania as Other and the country’s efforts to define itself in its own way and on its own terms” (Light 2007: 761).

These examples have much to tell us about modern tourism, and the place and politics of Gothic tourism in contemporary culture. First, although frequently sharing a concern with something which could broadly be labeled as history (castles, dungeons, the history of torture, for example), heritage tourism and Gothic tourism are frequently at odds. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere (McEvoy 2010), Gothic tourism in London arises because of the absence of valuable heritage in parts of the city which are nevertheless felt to have cultural capital (in this case Southwark). Second, the Gothic, as the stuff of nightmares (like Freddy Krueger), is required to remain within its own fictionalization and not intrude onto ground which has become consecrated to the reality of disaster. Gothic tourism and the “memory-scape,” a term coined by Tim Edensor in 1997 and defined by Light as “a piece of urban space organized around social remembering through the assemblage of key iconographic forms” (Light 2000: 165), sit uneasily side by side. This results in some bizarrely split-personality tourism in some places. For instance, the Eastern State Penitentiary, Pennsylvania, wears one official tourist mode for most of the year, but

because of its need for funds, it is seasonally gothicized in the form of “Terror Behind the Walls,” a Halloween attraction advertised as “A Massive Haunted House in a Real Prison” (Terror Behind the Walls). Management discomfort can be seen through the almost schizophrenic nature of its website. “Terror Behind the Walls” has its own sub-section and is adorned with pictures of young actors wearing the make-up of disfigurement. The photography on display here is very different from the rest of the site’s house style, as displayed in the “professional and historic photographs provided by Eastern State Penitentiary” (Eastern State Penitentiary Image Gallery), which is predominantly that of architectural photography, focusing on line, and characterized by a subdued sense of color – and an absence of human bodies.

Third, as may be seen in the case of Romania’s Dracula tourism, it helps that Gothic tourism be somehow consonant with or arising from the cultural interests or traditions of the place that generates it. Thus, Scotland’s Gothic tourism arises from a national tradition rich with ghost stories and other Gothic writing; Inglis and Holmes, drawing on John and Margaret Gold’s *Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism Since 1750* (1995), point out that nineteenth-century tourists often “held in their hands guidebooks and other materials that were composed by copywriters imitating the style of Scott” (Inglis and Holmes 2003: 56). Likewise, London’s Gothic tourism takes place in a city that has been relentlessly gothicized in literature and film. Romania’s Gothic tourism, by contrast, results from the re-hashing of folk legend and history by an Irish writer in a western European literary tradition. As Light (2007) points out, Dracula was not even translated into Romanian until 1990.

The examples given above serve to highlight some of the main differences between Gothic tourism and tourism of other kinds. Whilst other modes of tourism, particularly heritage tourism, arise from, and in relation to, a particular site, Gothic tourism often involves a distancing from the actual site and/or encourages imaginative creation of other places and characters. Gothic tourism often, though not always, involves a superimposition, an overlay: a wandering Freddie Krueger, a fake dungeon, for example, or an ability to “see” ghosts. Gothic tourism takes its brief not from history so much as from fiction, or more properly, from fictionalization: from the set of discourses and the tropes that the Gothic scholar recognizes as Gothic. Although, from the perspective of Gothic studies, this might sound like something of a tautology, it is a point worth making, and one which many in Tourist Studies have fallen foul of, failing to identify the congruence of a set of often heavily stylized features, and the cultural expectations, in terms of audience/consumer response, that might accompany them. In other words, Gothic tourism is a very different kind of tourism. It stems from fictionalization and has a sense of its own origin within a specific cultural discourse. It has very different attitudes to the concept of place, to the idea of performance and to its audience, the tourists themselves. And of course, its sense of affect is radically different from other kinds of tourism.

The term “Gothic tourism” is not one that has general critical acceptance; it is not a niche area of research with a string of cultural commentators to its name. In the field of Tourist Studies, although there are a few researchers who have addressed the area, it is generally because of their interest in fields which, for the moment, overlap: for example, an interest in Scotland’s or Romania’s tourism, or, with the phenomenon classified in Tourist Studies as “dark tourism” (Lennon and Foley 2007) which

also includes disaster tourism and thanatourism. In terms of Literary Studies, there are, as yet, no scholarly works dedicated to the subject of Gothic tourism, although aspects of Gothic tourism have been touched on by a variety of writers. Those academic arguments that have been advanced primarily address the extent to which early Gothic writers, such as Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley, made use of the conventions of travel literature in the composition of their fictions (Decker 2005).

EARLY GOTHIC TOURISM

Gothic tourism is not merely a contemporary phenomenon but has been around for as long as the literary Gothic itself. Indeed, there is a good case for thinking of early literary Gothic, with its depictions of abbeys and castles, of ruins and wild landscapes, as a kind of vicarious tourism. Certainly literary Gothic was born in an age of tourism, at a time when domestic tourism was becoming increasingly affordable for, and popular with, a middle-class public. Horace Walpole, William Beckford and Ann Radcliffe were all keen tourists, and the two latter authors published celebrated tourist writing. Significantly, when Radcliffe's *A Journey made in the Summer of 1794* was published in 1795, reviewers declared that its landscape descriptions were much better suited to this context than those found in Radcliffe's novels.

Not only can it be argued that the Gothic novel is, as it were, a touristic genre, but it is also significant that actual Gothic tourism was instigated by some of the early Gothic writers themselves, among them Walpole and Beckford. Both built their own Gothic castles: Walpole, Strawberry Hill and Beckford, Fonthill Abbey. Walpole's Strawberry Hill was open to visitors. Beckford's Fonthill, too, was intended as a destination for cultured visitors, although with Beckford's distaste for plebeian and bourgeois culture it was never likely to become a ticketed attraction in the way that Strawberry Hill was. Both buildings were types of aesthetic experiment: "fantasy architectures" "architecture theatricalized, or, made into masquerade" (McEvoy 2010: 145). Both break generic boundaries, putting, as it were, the visitor in the position of the protagonist of a novel, and realizing the space of Gothic fiction in architectural reality. These characteristics of the performed Gothic house can be found today in a variety of forms of modern Gothic tourism, whether Dennis Severs's House in Spitalfields, the Dungeons attractions or a building such as Samlesbury Hall, Lancashire, which was due to become a "bleak house" in December 2012, after having been given a "spooky seasonal makeover to transform it into Charles Dickens's Haunted Mansion" (A Fright Before Christmas).

However, Gothic tourism was not only invented by the early practitioners of literary Gothic. It also came into being in the metropolises of London and Paris in the wake of new or newly improved technologies – magic lantern shows, wax works – and to cater for a leisure-hungry urban audience. As E.J. Clery points out in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (1995), Gothic arose and prospered in late-eighteenth-century consumer culture precisely because that culture had ceased to believe in ghosts. "Freed from the service of doctrinal proof, the ghost was to be caught up in the machine of the economy; it was available to be processed, reproduced, packaged, marketed and distributed by the engines of cultural production" (Clery 1995: 17). Gothic tourism is part of this packaging and marketing of ghosts. Significantly, Clery begins her study by looking at the phenomenon of the Cock Lane ghost and the

“crowds who rush to Cock Lane to witness the haunting” (Clery 1995: 17). The exemplary moment in Clery’s account of the rise of Gothic is one of what could be called proto-Gothic tourism, where a “ghost” performs for the amusement and astonishment of an audience which is in large part composed of those with a “hedonistic acceptance of ghosts as a fiction” (Clery 1995: 17–18).

Late-eighteenth-century Gothic tourism as a properly commercial prospect is to be found in such phenomena as Robertson’s Phantasmagoria, as played in Paris and London, and the wax museum of Madame Tussauds. Robertson’s Phantasmagoria, like Strawberry Hill and Fonthill, was both dependent on a physical site and reframed it, or mocked it up. Working from the plans of the original building, David Jones in *Gothic Machine* (2011) argues that although the Paris Phantasmagoria seemed to be taking place in a crypt, it was in fact located in what had previously been the convent’s refectory. The Phantasmagoria borrowed from the highly popular Gothic fiction of its time; it played out Gothic tropes – strange disembodied music, unknown portraits, the journey through the dark, strange signs, the experience of the crypt – and recreated the rhythms of Gothic fiction, its short staccato stabs of fear and periods of drawn-out suspense, in real time. The Phantasmagoria specifically aimed not just to create a Gothic atmosphere but also to produce Gothic affect: fear, surprise and horror.

CONTEMPORARY GOTHIC TOURISM

Until recently in the UK, Gothic tourism tended to be the province of major cities (Edinburgh, London), but its domain is widening considerably. Derby markets itself as one of the UK’s most haunted cities, largely due to the influence of Richard Felix, who, as Carrie Clanton (2007) points out, went from Derby’s head of tourism to historical investigator on TV’s *Most Haunted* (Fielding and Beattie 2002–10). A Zombie Manor House is to be found in Warrington and a Zombie Boot Camp in Droitwich. Rural areas, too, are hosting Gothic tourist attractions. This has long been the case in the US, with the genre of the Haunted Hayride, but a relative novelty in the UK. Recently advertised attractions include the US-influenced Hex in the Harvest, “An ill wind is blowing in the corn . . .” (Hex in the Harvest), and various Gothic camping experiences. Ghost walks are now ubiquitous; there is hardly a small town in contemporary Britain which does not have one, even if only seasonally or occasionally. Bath runs ghost tours every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night all year round, awarding a “Bravery Certificate (suitable for 7–15 years)” (Ghost Walks of Bath). Exeter’s Red Coat Guided Tour “Spooks & Broomsticks” is guided by a volunteer and run by the city council (Spooks and Broomsticks Tour). Copy for the Haunted and Hidden Bristol tour gives a good idea of the variety of fare on offer at such events: “Hear about Clifton’s ghostly Dwarf Highwayman See Bristol’s famous Haunted Cinema Visit a 16th Century Haunted House Hear about a Church and it’s [*sic*] ghostly Monk See where a Cook chased a Ghost! Visit Tv and Film locations and many fun & interesting sites!!!” (Haunted and Hidden Bristol).

The patterns of Gothic tourism are, unsurprisingly, those of bourgeois consumption. The majority of attractions fit neatly either into a working-day schedule or into the hours of evening leisure. Evening events, such as the sleepover in Bodmin Jail or Warwick Castle’s Dungeons After Dark, usually come with a meal deal. Jamaica

Inn's Ghost Hunt events include "2 course carvery with vegetarian option" (Jamaica Inn). Ghost Hunting companies even come with their own Mission Statements: "We aim to continue delivering a quality service that will ensure that we remain the market leader in public, private and corporate ghost investigations" (Haunted Happenings).

Contemporary Gothic tourism exists in varying degrees of profitability. Many ghost tours are run with barely any profit motivation, led by volunteers or part-time enthusiasts. Gothic tourism can, however, be very big business. The UK-based Merlin Entertainments Group, the world's second largest operator of parks and attractions, manages and owns the Sea Life Centers, Legoland and the London Eye, but also has a substantial Gothic end to its range, including Madame Tussauds and the Dungeons attractions (London, Edinburgh, York, Hamburg, Blackpool, Warwick and Amsterdam) and Alton Towers, most of which is, or is supposed to be, family-friendly. Merlin also do a nice sideline in what might be called Gothic accessorization. At the Chessington World of Adventures, as well as visit the Sea Life center and view the wild animals, visitors can "soar on the Vampire rollercoaster through Transylvania" (Chessington World of Adventures).

Contemporary Gothic tourism exists in a plethora of forms and indeed, as Catherine Spooner has pointed out in relation to Whitby's Gothic tourism, different versions may be found fighting it out in one place. Spooner discusses the novel *Dracula*'s modeling of "two forms of Gothic tourism: a vulgar one associated with consumption of food, souvenirs and sensational ghost stories, and a genteel one in which landscape and local colour are appreciated alongside literary associations" (Spooner 2012). She argues that there is a similar opposition of tourist modes in Whitby today, concluding "the twin drives of commodified heritage and subcultural carnival function to create a space in which Gothic is celebrated as both mainstream leisure and alternative pleasure" (Spooner 2012).

In recent years, the phenomenon of performed architecture has taken a new direction in the form of the Scare Attraction. The creators of Scare Attractions (known as Haunted Attractions in the US) are often not only adept at marketing and sophisticated in contemporary media practice, but also highly conversant with the specialized vocabularies of Gothic studies. Thus I leave the definition of the form to AtmosFEAR: "Scare attractions are live theatrical experiences in which an audience moves through a themed environment populated by sets, props, special effects and, usually, live scareactors" (Scare Attractions). The scare attraction differentiates itself from much other contemporary Gothic tourism (and the performed house of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) by the extent to which it is driven not just by Gothic atmosphere and the realization of Gothic tropes but by a much more substantial degree of narrativization. "A narrative drives the audience through the experience as they encounter visual, tactile and sound effects intended to scare them," write AtmosFEAR (Scare Attractions). The scare attraction plants its consumers within its fictions, often giving them a role to play, or sometimes (in the case of Zombie scenarios, for example, where it is possible to move from victim to persecutor) more than one role. The role of persecuted protagonist, or one of a group of persecuted protagonists, is especially popular. The vocabulary relating to such mock-ups and performances has changed since the late eighteenth century; nowadays, a term deriving from theater, "immersive," is most often used. This, in

itself, is significant. Remediation, of course, has been important in the history of Gothic tourism, and the level and rate of remediation is particularly marked in contemporary Gothic tourism: AtmosFEAR's website, describing a subgenre, EXScream, claims that it "brings to life the horrors of videogames, movies and novels" (EXScream Attractions). However, it is the relationship with theatricality or live performance that is most integral to much contemporary Gothic tourism – and not just to scare attractions.

London's Necrobus is a London double-decker bus, which is painted not red but black and decorated inside with plush curtains, and dim tabletop lamps with dangly shades. Its tongue-in-cheek back-story is that it was one of a supposed funeral fleet. The Necrobus – punningly referred to as London Ghost Bus Tours on its website (Ghost Bus Tours) – is a witty and enjoyable affair which cleverly points up its differences from other modes of tourism. As the bus went along the Embankment on one of the few sunny evenings of July 2012, and as its passengers were about to take in one of London's finest views, the guide announced that the blinds were to go down, pointing out that this was "part of the sight-seeing tour where you don't see the sights." The Necrobus has a keen sense of the history of ghost-watching as an entertainment form. The bus drives past Cock Lane and the guide with pleasure recounts the story of "Scratching Fanny the Cock Lane Ghost" and her exposure as a fake. Like many other instances of contemporary Gothic tourism, the Necrobus is canny in its ability to work across media. The guide addresses tourists directly but also directs their attention to the CCTV, through which he presents himself at certain moments as if he were in a film. He speaks into the CCTV, his head angled in order best to obtain certain zoomed-in shots or distortions, recreating before the tourists' eyes the kind of images familiar from Gothic film and TV, within a black-and-white video-effect reminiscent of the grainy hand-held realism of the *Blair Witch Project*. Significantly, the recourse is not to high technology, but to audience competence in terms of reading technology. Tourists are required to employ dual perspective and to understand both modes of presentation – real-life encounter and stylized video presentation – simultaneously. The mainstay of the Necrobus, however, is the actors. Its mode of tourism is fundamentally performative. As one of its "testi-moan-ials" points out, it is a "full on theatrical experience . . . not just another tourist trap" (Ghost Bus Tours). The guide employs skills of audience interaction, of witty rejoinder, of a compere thinking on his feet. When he comes on board, Mr Hinge, the bad-tempered "health and safety inspector," is more fully character-possessed. Much of the thrill of the tour is derived from being within a live performance, one which cleverly alternates between different styles and different degrees of audience interaction.

The principle of performance is central to contemporary Gothic tourism, even if only in the form, as in innumerable scare attractions or the "Scream" section of London's Madame Tussauds, of made-up figures, lurching from the dark or suddenly screaming. As an American haunted attraction website puts it, "even with all the money spent on amazing sets and animatronics, the most effective way to create one of the country's best haunted house events is to put more effort into character development and acting" (Haunted House Association). Part of the attraction, at least, lies in our understanding of theater as a form. In a way that was not true in the eighteenth century, theater today is a kind of ancient technology, a medium of the

past. As such, it functions in much Gothic tourism not only as means but also as its content.

GOTHIC TOURISTS

On the ghost tours that I have been on, I am frequently surprised by how many of the tourists are local people, those who work and/or live in the area. They participate in the ghost tour as a specific kind of entertainment because they want to experience a certain kind of performance. More than this, they expect, and presumably want, to participate in the performances themselves. Kristine Keller points out that ghost walks are “immersive” and the tourists “participants in a dramatic experience” (Keller 2010: 2). Its form is a substantial part of the attraction of the tour for many: the tour not only draws our attention to the past but also mirrors some of the forgotten forms of pedestrianism of the past. Following a bizarrely dressed actor, ritually processing through streets, the tourists on a ghost walk are performing. The tourists on the Necrobus, too, perform: they participate in a mock séance, and some are drawn into dialogue with the guide or Mr Hinge. When Mr Hinge runs in horror from the bus, he deliberately draws the attention of passers-by, who inevitably turn to look at the tourists – excellent site-specific advertising to boot.

Gothic tourism since its very beginning has been, in a way that no other genre could be, conducted in real time and with the consumer’s body at the center of the experience. Gothic tourism specializes in the body, whether in the form of the uncannily life-like waxwork undergoing tortures (as in Madame Tussauds, or The Clink or numerous dungeon attractions), or in the wholesale embodiment of the Gothic consumer. The centrality of the consumer’s body is particularly marked in contemporary Gothic tourism. Whether pumped up with adrenaline in a scare attraction, or roller-coasting at Alton Towers, or being splattered with mock blood, the tourist’s body is central to the experience. On the Necrobus, although the guide keeps his respectful distance, the unhinged Mr Hinge sits amongst the audience and constantly tests the limits of personal space, cowering and cringing in the gangway, diving under seats, brandishing “blood-stained” tissues into people’s faces. Toward the end of the tour everyone is invited to hold hands with the people around them for the mock séance.

Consideration of the Gothic tourist offers a new perspective on the consumption of Gothic in the modern world – and also on our ideas of affect in relation to Gothic. As Light observes apropos of tourist behavior in contemporary Dracula tourism to Romania,

During their visit to Transylvania, these tourists were engaged in much more than mindless hedonism or passive sightseeing. Instead they enacted a wide range of complex and creative embodied performances . . . Central to the whole experience was the role of the imagination.

(Light 2009: 254)

Gothic tourists are indeed embodied creatures. They expect to encounter place as performance, and often to perform within it. In contrast to many other modes of Gothic consumption, the experience of the Gothic tourist, with the marked

exception of solitary pilgrimages to such Gothic destinations as Whitby, tends to be communal, and the tourists closely bonded together. On the Necrobus, for instance, seats face each other and groups of tourists are telling ghost stories even before the bus starts. Whether it be Gothic camping, Ghost tourism or Zombie events, tourists tend to travel with friends and/or family. Relations with ghosts and monsters, despite the occasional fainting incident or panic attack in a Hay Ride Halloween, are predicated on communal enjoyment and socially pleasurable thrills.

CONCLUSION

Philip Stone, in “‘It’s a Bloody Guide’: Fun, Fear and a Lighter Side of Dark Tourism at the Dungeon Visitor Attractions, UK,” turns to the terminology of Performance Studies and the concept of “staged authenticity” (Stone 2009: 181). What is notable about Gothic tourism, however, is its staged inauthenticity – and this proves the blindspot of many critics. Carrie Clanton, focusing on ghost walks in Brighton and Derby, Warwick Castle and Mary King’s Close in Edinburgh, argues that “ghosts are utilised in a secular way by the British tourist and heritage industries, supporting claims of historical authenticity and the right to heritage status” (Clanton 2007: 1). However, not only are the relations between heritage and the Gothic much more complicated than this would suggest, but also much Gothic tourism lays no claim to any idea of authenticity whatsoever, apart from the authenticity of the audience/spectator contract. In somewhat similar vein, Inglis and Holmes argue that “the ghost no longer frightens people *away* . . . Instead, the industry pledges the present of the specter as a way of luring tourists and their spending-power *in* to a particular locale” (Inglis and Holmes 2003: 57). Again, this involves a certain misunderstanding of the nature of Gothic tourism. Most Gothic tourism does not pledge ghosts (though it will pledge scares and atmosphere). On the Necrobus, the only person to ask “When do we see the ghosts?” was a five-year-old boy.

Gothic tourism usually has a somewhat complicated relation to heritage tourism in the modern world. In Britain, at least, it intertwines interestingly with the heritage industry in general, pointing up the choices and problems of the latter (particularly the lack of bodies and dirt) and serving to articulate some of the discrepancy between heritage and inheritance. Gothic tourism often testifies to a felt sense of cultural, rather than architectural, heritage, and in the cases of such attractions as the Dungeons or the Necrobus, it may provide a kind of running commentary on some of the popular cultural directions of the last 250 years.

Gothic tourism has been around for as long as literary Gothic itself, and is born of the same consumer culture. It takes its cues from fiction and can be impressively transmedial. Central to Gothic tourism is the principle of overlay or supplementation of place. It is to a large extent a performance industry. Although it is unlikely ever to win any grants for cultural tourism in the EU, its techniques, form and subject matter are often surprisingly close to those of more respected theater. The study of Gothic tourism can help illuminate some of the blind-spots in Gothic studies, and in no respect more so than in the study of its consumer: the Gothic tourist. Directing the spotlight at the Gothic tourist provides a unique opportunity for the study of Gothic affect, and a Gothic mode which is communal, immersive and performative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Sunday Swift, for some entertaining and enlightening email exchanges on Gothic tourism in the USA.

REFERENCES

- “A Fright Before Christmas” (n.d.). Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.dickenshauntedmansion.com>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Baetica, I. (2004) “Theatre of the absurd,” *New Internationalist Magazine*, 366. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.newint.org/features/2004/04/01/romania/>> (accessed October 14, 2012).
- Botting, F. (2008) *Limits of Horror: Technology, Bodies, Gothic*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Chessington World of Adventures (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.merlinentertainments.biz/en/brands/cwoa.aspx>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Clanton, C. (2007) “‘Living’ History: Ghost Tourism in the UK,” paper presented at ASA Conference 2007: Thinking Through Tourism London. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://tinyurl.com/ctbfjfa>> (accessed October 9, 2012).
- Clery, E.J. (1995) *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762–1800*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Decker, G. (2005) *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Eastern State Penitentiary Image Gallery (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.easternstate.org/explore/flickr>> (accessed October 14, 2012).
- EXScream Attractions (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.atmosfearuk.com/exscream-attractions>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Ghost Bus Tours (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.theghostbustours.com>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Ghost Walks of Bath (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.ghostwalksofbath.co.uk>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Haunted and Hidden Bristol (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.hauntedandhiddenbristol.co.uk>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Haunted Happenings (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.hauntedhappenings.co.uk/index.php>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Haunted House Association (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.haunted-houseassociation.org/featured_articles/haunted_house_in_lexington_kentucky_the_screampark_scariest_haunted_house.cfm> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Hex in the Harvest (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.atmosfearuk.com/hex-in-the-harvest>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Inglis, D. and Holmes, M. (2003) “Highland and Other Haunts: Ghosts in Scottish Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 30.1: 50–63.
- Jamaica Inn (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.jamaicainn.co.uk/ghosts>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Jones, D.J. (2011) *Gothic Machine: Textualities, Pre-Cinematic Media and Film in Popular Visual Culture, 1670–1910*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Keller, K. (2010) “Ghost Tours as a Form of Alternative Tourism.” Online. Available HTTP: <http://csun.academia.edu/KristineKeller/Papers/968554/Ghost_Tours_as_A_Form_of_Alternative_Tourism> (accessed October 14, 2012).
- Lennon, J. and Foley, M. (2007) *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, London: Continuum.

- Light, D. (2000) "Gazing on Communism: Heritage Tourism and Post-Communist Identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania," *Tourism Geographies*, 2.2: 157–76.
- (2007) "Dracula Tourism in Romania: Cultural Identity and the State," *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34.3: 746–65.
- (2009) "Performing Transylvania: Tourism, Fantasy and Play in a Liminal Place," *Tourist Studies*, 9.3: 240–58.
- McEvoy, E. (2010) "'West End Ghosts and Southwark Horrors': London's Gothic Tourism," in A. Witchard and L. Phillips (eds) *London Gothic: Place, Space and the Gothic Imagination*, London: Continuum, 140–52.
- Scare Attractions (n.d.) Online. Available [http: <http://www.atmosfearuk.com/scare-attractions>](http://www.atmosfearuk.com/scare-attractions) (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Spooks and Broomsticks Tour (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.heartofdevon.com/exeter/whats-on/red-coat-guided-tour-spooks-and-broomsticks-tour-p1414673>> (accessed November 25, 2012).
- Spooner, C. (2012) "Swishing About and Spookiness: Whitby and Gothic Literary Tourism from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to Paul Magrs' *Never the Bride*," paper presented at the Bram Stoker Centenary Conference, University of Hull.
- Stone, P.R. (2009) "It's a Bloody Guide': Fun, Fear and a Lighter Side of Dark Tourism at the Dungeon Visitor Attractions, UK," in R. Sharpley and P.R. Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Bristol: Channel View Publications, 167–85.
- "Terror Behind the Walls" (n.d.) Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.easternstate.org/Halloween>> (accessed September 21, 2012).

FURTHER READING

- Armitt, L. (2010) *Twentieth-Century Gothic*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press. (Discusses the relation between Walpole's Strawberry Hill and Alton Towers in Introduction.)
- Gold, J.R. and M.M. (1995) *Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism Since 1750*, Aldershot: Scolar Press. (Discusses the representation of Scotland in 250 years of tourism.)
- McEvoy, (2011) "Dennis Severs' House: Performance, Psychogeography and the Gothic," *Visual Culture in Britain*, 12.2: 185–201. (Considers the phenomenon of performed architectures both in the eighteenth century and in contemporary examples of Gothic tourism.)
- Stone, P.R. (2006) "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions," *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal*, 54.2: 145–60. (Considers the range of "Dark Tourism," from "thanatourism" to "dark fun factories.")
- Watson, N.J. (2006) *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Considers the phenomenon of literary tourism in nineteenth-century culture, discussing the relations between fiction, biography and tourist practice.)

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

GOTHIC ON THE SMALL SCREEN



Brigid Cherry

As Helen Wheatley has observed, the Gothic mode on television is one that draws on narrative and aesthetics in order to provide the emotional effects of terror, eliciting in the viewer the thrills and pleasures of a certain “shiver-sensation.” Indeed, the Gothic bears a certain affinity with the medium of television itself, be that in terms of technology and televisuality, or through the definitive domesticity of its location: Wheatley calls it “the most domestic of genres on the most domestic of media” (Wheatley 2006: 25). However, an account of the ways in which the aesthetics of television provide a vehicle for visualizations of the Gothic is somewhat complicated by the fact that it is not always easy to define Gothic television as a discrete and concrete genre. As Eddie Robson has shown, the genre’s flexibility is considerable, and series like *The X-Files* (Carter 1993–2002) demonstrate that the Gothic has historically been incorporated into a broad range of television texts and spread across a large number of genres (Robson 2007: 243).

ORIGINS

Wheatley’s account establishes that television has long drawn on the Gothic as a narrative source. What she considers Gothic television can be traced back to examples of the ghost story in the medium’s infancy, but which reached its prime in the 1960s and 1970s (Wheatley 2006: 27). The various horror, fantasy and supernatural anthology series that appeared regularly in the schedules began in the 1940s and are still seen today with such productions as *Masters of Horror* (Garris 2005–7) in the 2000s. Many of these series included adaptations of classic Gothic and supernatural fiction, and exploited the spectrality of black-and-white technology in a manner reminiscent of Stacey Abbott’s account of the spectral cinematic image: “ghostly shadows of the dead are re-animated through technological means” (Abbott 2004: 3). And, of course, color television offers opportunities for different approaches to Gothic tropes, particularly in the form of the televisual spectacle that Abbott discusses in respect of *True Blood* (Ball 2008-), a spectacle which “draws upon traditional television aesthetics, if only to render them horrific” (Abbott 2012: 31). Although the technology of television has evolved, its effect has remained much the same.

Wheatley's main focus is on television in the 1960s, but, as she acknowledges, Gothic television emerged in the 1940s. Amongst the earliest of these series was *Lights Out*, which began on American radio in the 1930s (Cooper 1934–35) and ran on television from 1946 to 1952. *Lights Out* provides a number of examples of television Gothic, with episodes based on stories by M.R. James, Edgar Allan Poe and August Derleth. *The Lost Will of Dr Rant*, broadcast in 1951, is a typical example of how television provided a natural home for the Gothic mode. This episode is an early television adaptation of M.R. James's "The Tractate Middoth" (from *More Ghost Stories* of 1911), also later adapted for an episode of the British anthology series *Mystery and Imagination* (1966–70) in 1966. This particular episode provides a key illustration of the early Gothic form on television. It is introduced by a host or narrator, speaking in slow and sonorous tones, and lit to appear as a disembodied head on a black background; the only other feature visible on the screen is a guttering candle which extinguishes to the words "lights out." This typically haunting imagery sets the scene for the tale that follows. As befits the genre and the source material, there is nothing particularly explicit shown on screen: the horror is all suggestive – eerie music, ominous pauses, suggestions of hidden horror – save for three more overt shots of the haunting figure with an uncanny visage. The visual aesthetics here, while constrained by the technology of the time, are concordant with the Gothic elements of the narrative that they illustrate: the dominant medium shot interspersed by occasional cuts to the uncanny visage of the ghost, a building sense of suspense through music and a seemingly hysterical protagonist.

Such aesthetics are typical of the Gothic-themed episodes of the supernatural anthology series: *The Twilight Zone* (Serling 1959–64), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (Hitchcock 1955–62), *Mystery and Imagination*, *Night Gallery* (Serling 1969–73) and others. These series illustrate that elements of the Gothic could be exploited in order to bring thrills and terrors into the home, giving expression to anxieties that were often related to those of the time (Wheatley 2006: 38). In doing so, *Hammer House of Horror* (Skeggs 1980) and *Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense* (Skeggs 1984) exploited the lurid terrain of the studio's Gothic oeuvre in the move to television, as do more recent series such as *Masters of Horror* and *American Horror Story* (Murphy and Falchuk 2011–), both regarded as an anthology with a new storyline for each season. Conversely, the Gothic horror cinema familiar from Hammer as well as the Universal Studio was also pastiched in televisual melodramas, soaps and sitcoms such as *The Addams Family* (Addams 1964–66), *The Munsters* (Burns and Hayward 1964–66) and *Dark Shadows* (Curtis 1966–71). These series borrowed from and heavily parodied the big screen's Gothic monsters, watering down their impact in the process, not least of all in *The Munsters*, a series which is aimed at children. As Abbott suggests of *True Blood*, these series "overtly use television to comment on the TV vampire" (Abbott 2012: 37) and, by extension, the Gothic in general.

DISTINCTION AND QUALITY

As such, questions of distinction and quality are central to discussions of Gothic television. Matt Hills, extending Mark Jancovich's (*Horror: The Film Reader* [2002]) and Peter Hutchings's (*The Horror Film* [2004]) definitions of horror and Gothic

modes in film, suggests that there are performative acts of generic (re)classification applying to examples of horror on television (Hills 2005: 120). Gothic television functions as a discursive Other to horror, the identifying features of which are gore, splatter, graphic monstrosity and other conventions often associated with low-cultural forms and tastes. Gothic television is conversely identified by its restrained suggestion of terror and it carries connotations of historical tradition which are crucial to its position as art and high culture. The Gothic novel and supernatural fiction are positioned alongside costume drama and heritage productions such as other adaptations of classic novels. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Andy Murray (2007) argues that some of the very best episodes of the mid-1970s *Doctor Who* (Newman 1963–89, revived 2005–present), such as “The Talons of Weng Chiang” (1977) and “The Pyramids of Mars” (1975), drew on the Gothic, taking advantage of the BBC’s production experience in heritage television.

Accordingly, the BBC has long maintained the British cultural link with the Gothic as a form of quality programming. Seasonal ghost story adaptations included *A Ghost Story For Christmas* strand (Clark 1971–78, revived 2005), which adapted the works of Charles Dickens (“The Signalman” 1976), M.R. James (“A Warning to the Curious” 1972) and others, and cast respected British actors such as Denholm Elliott and Robert Hardy. This type of production could also be found as one-off drama, such as those made by the BBC arts program *Omnibus* (1967–2003), again emphasizing notions of distinction and quality. These included adaptations of M.R. James’s “Whistle And I’ll Come to You” in 1968 and Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Schalken the Painter” in 1979. This high-cultural provenance can be seen in the Gothic aesthetics of “Schalken the Painter,” but the adaptation also shares generic tropes with earlier series such as *Lights Out*.

Like *Lights Out*, “Schalken” begins with a moment referencing darkness. The scene is lit by a candle and the background is black, the actors appearing to float within the screen. “Turn from the light . . . Look into the dark,” the painter instructs his model, as the camera movement leads the viewer into the blackness. The dominant color palette of warm yellows and browns is offset by dark blues and blacks, as much to reflect the composition of Golden Age Dutch painting – its televisuality is in an art style later epitomized by Peter Greenaway, Derek Jarman and Stanley Kubrick on film – as it is to evoke horror lurking in the shadows. Present, too, is a narrator introducing the “terrible story” behind a painting, and drawing attention to “total shadow” in the background of the work “except that that dim light [of a candle] seems to define in the darkness some form.” As befits its high-cultural status and programming, there is an element of art history in the narration. However, the emphasis on Gothic horror is explicit: “But his later work, which I promise you will see and remember, seems to have its roots in some private world of dreams perhaps never otherwise expressed.”

Though clearly “Schalken” is the more technically advanced, like *Lights Out* it illustrates the way in which Gothic tropes can be rendered televisually. But over and above this, these programs also illustrate that the Gothic transcends differences between high culture (the art film, classic Gothic short stories) and popular cultural forms (the anthology series, popular entertainment designed to scare). As the arguments surrounding the opposition between horror and terror that Hills engages with suggest, the Gothic itself is by no means generically pure. As Fred Botting has pointed

out, the Gothic has been a hybrid form since its inception in the eighteenth century (Botting 2008). This hybridity is especially crucial in considering the aesthetics of the Gothic television series, many of which depend upon the straddling of several genres for their effect. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Whedon 1997–2003) and *Twin Peaks* (Lynch 1990–91) are examples of such generic palimpsests, having contemporary settings and being based upon the established popular genres of the teen drama/action hybrid and the police series/murder mystery respectively.

GOTHIC PASTICHE

Despite the discourses around questions of high and low culture, Gothic television transcends such divisions, as well as those of genre. The Gothic thus sits comfortably not just within and alongside supernatural and horror-themed productions (there is much overlap between the various forms) but in association with other genres too. In the age of TVIII, genre is of course a contested and perhaps problematical issue. Less contentious, perhaps, is a consideration of the extent to which televisual forms of the Gothic hold some of the mode's established conventions and canonical figures up to parody, subversion and pastiche.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer sets itself up as a Gothic series from the outset, in its focus upon the existence, and battle against, the paramount form of Gothic monster: the vampire. However, to borrow the words of L. Andrew Cooper, the series often tries but fails to resignify Gothic monstrosity (Cooper 2010: 89). Cooper is concerned with sexuality, but this might equally be applied to the Gothic as a whole. The dominant generic conventions of the series are those of, firstly, the teen drama, relating the friendships, relationships and emotional entanglements of a group of high school kids, and secondly, the action genre, with Buffy herself filling the role of action heroine. Touches of Gothic romance bubble just under the surface, and from the very first episode Buffy's relationships with the vampires Angel and Spike, as well as with the problematically positioned Riley, anchor the narrative. As a vampire who is in possession of a soul, Angel himself is an interesting Gothic figure, and much of the series focuses around his struggles with his vampiric nature and the difficulties that Buffy encounters in having a relationship with a monster that she is destined to oppose. The series is nevertheless often anything but dark, and the majority of storylines are dealt with in light-hearted and comic ways on one level or another. As Lorna Jowett suggests, "changing relationships are an important part of its serial element" (Jowett 2005: 29). Here, the subtext is as much about not fitting in with one's peers at school and coming to terms with one's sexuality or identity as it is about gothicized relationships. This is illustrated by the title sequence which, while showing a few monsters, emphasizes action and friendship. In this respect, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has an ambiguous relationship to popular Gothic from that of cinema and television. It incorporates its themes while the conventions of teen drama work simultaneously against them. In reworking many aspects of the Gothic, it offers contemporary audiences a new fresh look at the genre. A case in point is "Buffy vs Dracula" (5.1). It opens depicting Buffy's everyday life: she leaves her bed (which at this point she is sharing with Riley) during the night to fight and slay a vampire. After the credits it depicts the three couples (Willow and Tara, and Xander and Anya, Buffy and Riley) enjoying "normal" college student activities during a

sunny day on the beach. The viewer knows, however, that each of these couples is marked by monstrosity. It is not wholly unexpected, then, that a Gothic note is introduced when Willow uses magic to light the barbecue, the elements seemingly compensating, despite her disavowals, with a sudden thunderstorm. The darkening sky and the torrential rain provide a bridge to the shot of a stereotypical Gothic castle and two workmen unloading crates containing soil from Transylvania and Dracula himself (a scene straight from Stoker's novel). The juxtaposition of the Gothic scene with normality suggests a pastiche of the Gothic rather than a straightforward revisiting. Dracula is a parody of himself, even a goth-icized as opposed to Gothic reworking: white skin, dark-shadowed and penetrating eyes, pale lips, long hair, a widow's peak and a red-lined silk cloak. He is everything the vampire she has just slain – muscular, dressed in jeans and T-shirt – was not. "Get out!" she says, smiling incredulously when he introduces himself as Dracula. She does not take him seriously, as well she might not: "And you're sure this isn't just some fan boy thing, cos I've fought a couple of overweight, pimply vamps who called themselves Lestat." Not just *Dracula*, but all vampire fiction is, at this moment, up for ridicule. Xander, too, cannot take Dracula seriously, and responds to him with sarcasm: "Look who's got a bad case of dark prince envy." Both Buffy and Xander make fun of his accent through their bad impersonations: "And where'd you get that accent, Sesame Street?" says Xander impersonating the Count from the children's program. There may well be a clear Gothic link between Buffy and the darkness of her soul epitomized and actualized by Dracula, but she is given to trivializing it: "No. You know what I feel. Bored."

Furthermore, Dracula's dissolving into mist so as to avoid her stake is considered as "cheating": in this failure to conform to the conventions of the action film, Buffy is unable to demonstrate her fighting skills and physical prowess as an action heroine, skills which are regularly displayed as a form of spectacle within each episode and which are essential because they are, in Roland Barthes's terms, diacritic: not entirely necessary in order to stake the vampires, but there for the display of her literally buffed body. Although she does eventually take him seriously, a tone of levity is maintained throughout the episode: "Dracula smacula" and "Count encounter" (Buffy), and "Dracula doesn't use bleach, he's a darks only man" (Xander). Even Spike, who is the character most associated with a Gothic world by virtue of his living in a mausoleum lit by church candles, calls him a "poncey bugger" while nevertheless taking his power seriously.

Botting argues that Gothic conventions have been repeated so consistently as to be clichéd and at times "ridiculous" or excessive (Botting 1996: 1–4), while Jerrold E. Hogle identifies a tendency for Gothic literature to be "satirized for their excesses" once they "become relatively familiar" (Hogle 2002: 1). The episode thus incorporates a self-conscious dialogue with the Gothic. It reworks Stoker's novel and comments on its many film adaptations: Buffy is cast in the role of Lucy, receiving a nocturnal visit from Dracula which leaves her lethargic; Xander falls under his spell so as to fill the role of Renfrew; and Giles becomes Harker assaulted by the three brides. But Buffy, and the postmodern version of the Gothic that the series as a whole offers, remains the stronger, and this version of Dracula, despite his seductive powers, is ultimately weak and ineffectual. The Gothic castle with its vaulted cavernous hall, tapestries, candlelight and stag's head trophies is incongruously

located in Sunnydale; the Gothic milieu here is limited to the graveyard where Spike resides. Attention is drawn to this displacement when Riley says that he has lived in Sunnydale a couple of years without ever noticing the “big honking castle.” It is as if the episode itself is a fantasy within the larger text, and intended as a self-conscious reflection on the series’ relationship to the Gothic, a relationship that is ultimately rejected. Thus, Buffy, made to taste Dracula’s blood in his attempt to get her to see her true nature, does indeed find herself, but in a way that places her in a position of power and authority over both Stoker’s vampire and the classic Gothic he represents. “That was gross,” is her response to drinking his blood. She then “Eurotrashes” him, a message, at least within the confines of the series itself, that this old-fashioned (and Old World) style of the Gothic has no place within the contemporary teen mores and gender roles on display in *Buffy*. Although he does not exactly die – the idea of Dracula cannot be entirely expunged from the narrative any more than it can from the contemporary Gothic – he is consistently held at bay as a symbol of irrelevance and ineffectuality. When he starts to reform from the mist, Buffy rolls her eyes and rebukes him: “You think I don’t watch your movies? You always come back.” With a wry reference to the Gothic in popular culture, Dracula is disempowered. As the Gothic action heroine, Buffy has become the dominant figure of the postmodern Gothic.

THE HYBRID GOTHIC

Updatings of traditional Gothic monsters such as Dracula might leave them disempowered, but this does not mean that Gothic tropes do not enjoy currency in other genres. The Gothic is integral, for example, to the postmodern television cop show. As Bernice M. Murphy argues, such series “owe much more to the conventions of horror and the gothic than they do to those of the more traditional US detective drama” (Murphy 2006). Many such series are part of the Gothic oeuvre that permeates down to contemporary forensic police drama. The *CSI* (Zuiker 2000–) franchise and other series such as *Bones* (Hanson 2005–) and *Dexter* (Manos 2006–) frequently incorporate gothicized murders in their plots. Furthermore, the plots of Edgar Allan Poe find a direct echo in certain episodes. “The Aliens in a Spaceship” and “The Hero in the Hold” episodes of *Bones*, for example, contain storylines which, Poe-like, depict characters being buried alive by a serial kidnapper-murderer dubbed The Gravedigger, as in the case of the character Nick Stokes in the *CSI* episode “Grave Danger.” Similarly, the *CSI* episode “Stealing Home” and the *Bones* episode “The Man in the Wall” feature bodies bricked up in the walls of a family home and a dance club respectively. In a vague allusion to Poe’s “The Black Cat” (1843), cats are even suspected of the murder of an elderly woman in *CSI* “Cats in the Cradle” episode.

Although certainly an early example of the gothicized detective that lacks some of the “slick production values, expensive SFX and frequent use of CGI” as Murphy defines them, *Twin Peaks* also “illustrate[s] the ease with which the human body can be destroyed” (Murphy 2006). As Andreas Blassmann elaborates, “The Gothic has been an important dramatic element in *Twin Peaks* from the very beginning” (Blassmann 1999) and it provides an intriguing example of the Gothic detective story. This is clear in the plastic-wrapped body of Laura Palmer which opens the

series, the forensic examinations where cutout letters are found embedded under victims' nails, and the revelation of a serial killer at work. These are overlaid by elements of the supernatural and the uncanny. As a spectral murdered schoolgirl – her photograph is a prominent image in the series, appearing under the end credits, and she also appears to Cooper in dreams of the Red Room – Laura Palmer is the ghost haunting *Twin Peaks*. She is also a doubled figure, for not only is it revealed that she led a double life (taking cocaine and working at a brothel), but she also reappears as her own doppelgänger in the form of her identical cousin, Maddy Ferguson. As the Man From Another Place says, Laura herself is filled with secrets. The Red Room in the Black Lodge is a dream, and thus a puzzle to be solved, but also both a labyrinthine space and a hidden room or compartment where secrets can be found. Such secrets are encoded in enigmatic hand-gestures and phrases such as “fire walk with me,” the whispered words of Laura or the backward speak of the Man From Another Place – that is, even if these secrets are sometimes so prosaic as to be that the “gum you like will come back in style.” In keeping with the conventions of nineteenth-century Gothic fiction, wildlife in *Twin Peaks* has an affinity with evil and mystery; the creatures of the night make sweet music just as they did for Dracula, but they also represent an enigma: “the owls are not what they seem.” The title *Twin Peaks* already suggests the Gothic with its images of heavily forested mountains. More importantly, the industrial Gothic landscape of the sawmill, with its smokestacks and sparking saws in the opening titles, intercuts with the misty mountains and forests, ice and vertiginous waterfalls: the Great Northern hotel stands in for the Gothic castle in this most archetypal of locations. The landscape might be heaven as Cooper enthuses about the trees, but it also isolates. The setting of *Twin Peaks* thus makes televisual the sense of the sublime evoked by the Gothic landscape. The lingering establishing shots of the mountains and forests of Washington State, accompanied by the haunting music of Badalamenti, clearly link to the idea of man in thrall to nature. They bring to mind the travelogues of Ann Radcliffe in *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and certainly Cooper's literal journey to Twin Peaks and figurative journey to the Black Lodge recall the journeys of countless Gothic heroines. Moreover, as in Poe's fiction where codes and ciphers are significant, the message about the owls is one of three cryptic messages spoken to Cooper by the Giant (the others being “there is a man in a smiling bag” and “without chemicals, he points”), but it also comes to Agent Cooper (apparently) amongst the background noise of the universe. The message about the owls is part of the “decoded space garbage,” as Major Briggs refers to it.

Melodrama and soap-style domestic drama also work alongside televisual Gothic. The death at the heart of *Twin Peaks* is, like that in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) or Poe's “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839), a family tragedy that drags everyone in. In typically Lynchian fashion, the American dream is revealed as corrupt, and darkness and evil are revealed as lying at the center of the family. In this way, *Twin Peaks* sets up a Manichean duality. Clear narrative oppositions between good and evil underpin the series throughout: heaven and hell, light and dark, magic and science, and especially the Black and White Lodges. As Lenora Ledwon argues, *Twin Peaks* “returns to the domestic sphere – something repressed yet familiar – the specters of incest and family violence” (Ledwon 1993: 264). Agent

Cooper is the outsider in *Twin Peaks*, and in this sense he fills the role of the Gothic protagonist of the travelogue who is subsumed by the uncanny home. It is thus telling that while the action heroine that Buffy represents has overwritten the Gothic heroine, masculinity in *Twin Peaks* remains more problematical: in this instance, Gothic television has often rendered the role of the hero as a conceptual Gothic heroine. Where Buffy could resist Dracula, Bob ultimately possesses Agent Cooper. There may even be a direct nod here to vampirism, as Mark Frost observes:

When Leland talks about knowing Bob as a child and says this was someone who invited me to play and I invited him in, there's a certain classic type of vampire myth that comes into play when a soul that invites something into it to take part in its life cannot then refuse it anything.

(Altman 1991: 97)

These inflections of Gothic themes and aesthetics in disparate genres have seen the Gothic remain, anachronistically perhaps, a key element of television drama. Furthermore, Gothic tropes and forms of representation underpin examples of highly televisual programming in the era of TVIII. Here, genre is no less a problematical concept. Despite the divisions between horror and terror that Hills employs, explicit horror can frequently incorporate shivers, while the more suggestive modes of the Gothic can also include gory and violent spectacle. David Punter and Glennis Byron position the Southern Gothic in this respect in particular, arguing that it “is characterized by an emphasis on the grotesque, the macabre and, very often, the violent” (Punter and Byron 2004: 116–17). *True Blood* is a case in point. The hybrid Gothic atmosphere of the series, one that borrows from a Southern Gothic tradition and melds it together with the conventions of the popular Gothic vampire, is extremely explicit in terms of both sexuality and gore.

GOTHIC SPECTACLE

True Blood appeals to the contemporary desire for spectacle and sensation. In terms of aesthetics, setting and mood, the Gothic monsters of *True Blood* (including such human characters as René) are exposed to the light and to the camera which, as I have argued elsewhere, emphasizes their grotesque natures (Ruddell and Cherry 2012). Accordingly, gore and violence are shown explicitly, while an excess of light becomes uncomfortable, oppressive and suffocating. The blazing sunlight serves to emphasize the terror and the violence of René's attack on Sookie (1.12: “You'll be the Death of Me”). Even when Sookie hides in an open grave, the light reflects off her blond hair and shimmers on the grass above her. The image of Bill is distorted in a wave-like pattern so as to give the impression of the air shimmering in a heat haze. Sunlight is highlighted as visible shafts of light fall between the trees, and Bill, who must spend the daylight hours in a dank hole under the stairs in his decaying Gothic house, is burnt black by the sun. When Sookie kills René – significantly via a beheading, one of the traditional methods of slaying a vampire – it is a moment of extremely heightened violence depicted in detailed close up, the spade embedded deep in his neck.

In a similar way, scenes of vampirism and vampire death capitalize on the gore factor of the horror genre. When Eric kills the prisoner in the Fangtasia dungeon (2.1: “Nothing But the Blood”), the scene is awash with the noise of screams and tearing flesh as well as blood and gore: it spatters over Lafayette, and strings of blood and flesh stretch from victim’s neck to Eric’s mouth. In the following episode, his mouth and chin are completely covered with dried, encrusted blood. When Lorena has been torturing Bill she looks particularly Gothic in a glamorous black-and-white outfit, with heavy black eye make-up and her face streaked in blood. In a narrative thread that spans over 1,000 years, Russell’s slaughter of Eric’s family using werewolves, Talbot’s demise and then Russell going berserk and hijacking a news broadcast all emphasize the blood-lust and passions of the vampires. Russell relishes the blood when he tears out the newscaster’s spine. His hand entirely covered in thick dark blood, he tosses the spine casually over his shoulder and licks the back of his hand slowly with relish and satisfaction. His emotions change rapidly from triumph – “Mine is the true face of vampires” – to seething anger – “Why would we seek equal rights? You are not our equals” – to malice – “We will eat you after we eat your children” – and finally to scorn – “Now time for the weather. Tiffany?” An excess of gore also marks the killing of vampires: when Bill stakes Longshadow, when Eric kills Talbot and when Sookie stakes Lorena while Bill holds her down, torrents of blood gush from the mouth and the vampires explode in a red mess of blood and guts covering the space, the characters and the television screen itself.

Sexuality, too, is explicit. The series contains frequent scenes of graphic sexual acts. Misha Kavka, drawing on William Patrick Day, has suggested that “the Gothic tantalizes us with fear, both as its subject and its effect; it does so, however, not primarily through characters or plots or even language, but through *spectacle*” (Kavka 2002: 209; emphasis in text). Spectacle abounds in *True Blood*, and is evident on an episodic basis where sex and violence feature prominently. Heated sexual scenes frequently occur, such as those between Jason and his various partners and Sookie and Bill (and Sookie and Eric in season four). There is also a distinct sexual tension between Sookie and the werewolf Alcide. Moreover, *True Blood* is sensational in its depiction of sex and violence when capitalizing on the tensions and the intrigues of small-town life. Sex and violence are explicitly linked in René’s murders, in Maryann’s orgies and in Eric’s murder of Talbot. In this respect, it is significant that the majority of the Bon Temps residents are easily caught up in Maryann’s primal chaos. The residents may be in thrall to, and possessed by, Maryann, but their orgies can be read as an outburst of all their pent-up passions, angers and desires.

It should be noted, however, that as in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, these sequences are often accompanied by an ironic or comic tone. “There’s vampire in your cleavage,” Pam tells Sookie after Longshadow’s death; after Eric has killed the V-dealer he asks Lafayette if there is blood in his hair, all wrapped up in foils as Pam has been bleaching it; Russell scoops up the remains of Talbot and carries them around in a crystal bowl until Sookie pours them down the waste disposal in Fangtasia. The parodying of excess in *True Blood* is central to understanding its remediation of the Gothic. Its mode of address in this respect is often self-reflexive, acknowledging that its audiences are likely to be knowledgeable about certain Gothic conventions and tropes. Comedy, excess and explicit sexuality and violence are, in fact, in keeping with the boundary-pushing impulses of the HBO brand, and fit into the broader transformations of TVIII.

GOthic AESTHETICS ON THE SMALL SCREEN

While the Gothic flourishes within the landscape of television, it is non-mimetic, hybrid and extremely malleable. As a single generic entity, it is almost impossible to describe and comment upon, for Gothic television programs are not often like each other: they each define their own relationship to the Gothic. They have a place in both high culture and popular entertainment; they transcend genre and embrace it; they look to the arts as much for inspiration as to the practices of parody and pastiche. Space here has not allowed coverage of a very wide range of texts, but contemporary Gothic television includes such titles as the self-declared *American Gothic* (Cassidy 1995–96), the death-centered family and relationship drama *Six Feet Under* (Ball 2001–5), the supernatural historical drama *Carnivàle* (Knauf 2003–5) and the fragmented imagery of the alternative music channel screening goth, metal and emo videos. In such texts, it is aesthetics that are frequently paramount in creating the Gothic on the small screen. They are both affective, creating moments of terror, and diacritic, adding moments of spectacle in the form of action and explicit horror.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, S. (2004) 'Spectral Vampires: *Nosferatu* in the Light of New Technology', in S. Hantke (ed.) *Horror Film: Creating and Marketing Fear*, Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 3–20.
- (2012) "TV Love Fangs: The Televisuality of HBO Horror," in B. Cherry (ed.), *True Blood: Investigating Vampires and Southern Gothic*, London: I.B. Tauris, 25–38.
- Altman, M. A. (1991) *Twin Peaks Behind the Scenes: An Unofficial Visitor's Guide to Twin Peaks*, Las Vegas: Pioneer Books.
- Blassmann, A. (1999) "The Detective in *Twin Peaks*." Online: Available HTTP: <<http://www.thecityofabsurdity.com/papers/detective.html>> (accessed August 4, 2012).
- Botting, F. (1996) *Gothic*, London: Routledge.
- (2008) *Gothic Romanced*, London: Routledge.
- Cooper, L.A. (2010) *Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture*, Jefferson, NC: MacFarland.
- Hills, M. (2005) *The Pleasures of Horror*, London: Continuum.
- Hogle, J. (ed.) (2002) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jowett, L. (2005) *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Kavka, M. (2002) "The Gothic on Screen: Influence and Technique," in J.E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 209–28.
- Ledwon, L. (1993) "Twin Peaks and the Television Gothic." *Literature Film Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (October), 260–70.
- Murphy, B.M. (2006) "In Gore We Trust: Horror and the Modern US Crime Series," *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* 1. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/Thevault.html>> (accessed July 12, 2012).
- Murray, A. (2006) "The Talons of Robert Holmes," in D. Butler (ed.) *Time and Relative Dissertations in Space: critical perspectives on Doctor Who*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 217–32.

- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2004) *The Gothic*, London: Wiley Blackwell.
- Robson, E. (2007) “Gothic Television,” in C. Spooner and E. McEvoy (eds) *The Routledge Companion to the Gothic*, London: Routledge, 242–50.
- Ruddell, C. and Cherry, B. (2012) “More Than Cold and Heartless: The Southern Gothic Milieu of *True Blood*,” in B. Cherry (ed.) *True Blood: Investigating Vampires and Southern Gothic*, London: I.B. Tauris, 39–57.
- Wheatley, H. (2006) *Gothic Television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

FURTHER READING

- Abbott, S. and Lavery, D. (eds) (2011) *TV Goes To Hell: An Unofficial Road Map of Supernatural*, Toronto: ECW Press. (A range of essays on the narrative approaches, representations and hybridity in a series that transcends horror and the supernatural.)
- Akass, K. and McCabe, J. (eds) (2005) *Reading Six Feet Under: TV to Die For*, London: I.B. Tauris. (Exploring mourning, melancholia and representations of death in the realist-Gothic drama series.)
- Benshoff, H.M. (2011) *Dark Shadows*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. (Discussion of the cult Gothic soap opera as a television milestone.)
- Cherry, B. (ed.) (2012) *True Blood: Investigating Vampires and Southern Gothic*, London: I.B. Tauris. (Readings of the HBO series in the context of religion, fairytale, landscape, civil rights, transmedia narrative and fandom.)
- Lavery, D. (1995) *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. (Includes essays on the family, desire and the uncanny in *Twin Peaks*.)
- Wilcox, R.V. and Lavery, D. (eds) (2002) *Fighting the Forces: What’s at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. (A collection covering the literary, social and cultural meanings of the series.)
- Wheatley, H. (2005) “Haunted Houses, Hidden Rooms: Women, Domesticity and the Gothic Adaptation on Television,” in J. Bignell and S. Lacey (eds) *Popular Television Drama: Critical Perspectives*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. (Discussion of spectatorship and in particular the female protagonist and identification in Gothic adaptations.)

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

POST-MILLENNIAL MONSTERS

Monstrosity-no-more



Fred Botting

Monstrosity shadows millennial change. The coming of a millennium breeds anticipation and apprehension: more than a linear and literal entry into a new age, it is surrounded by promises of tremendous, radical, even unimaginable, change. The year 2000, following at least two decades of global upheaval in political and economic alignments, social organization and technological development, seemed to excite and terrify in equal measure. An upward curve of growth measured by performance tables and stock markets provided reassurance of the rectitude of new economic thinking: the future was rosy, or at least Orange, Apple or Microsoft. The trajectory was shadowed by the possibility of a particularly literal apocalypse embedded in the same technology underwriting global economic expansion: the coding of the machines that ran the world, so the story went, would be unable to process the new date, with unthinkable consequences for a developed world now dependent on computers for its heat, light, water, health, transportation and money. Digital clocks ticked. 1999 turned into 2000. And nothing happened.

The build-up had been lively, nonetheless, particularly on the darker front of speculation and in accord with a Gothic *fin-de-siècle* tendency to reanimate monsters. The hybrid horrors of SF-Gothic had actively pursued the implications of biotechnology for humanity's future: corporations would manufacture humanoid beings, seek out highly destructive new species and create digital networks capable of sentience and ready to terminate humanity – *Blade Runner* (R. Scott 1982); *Alien* (R. Scott 1979); *Terminator* (Cameron 1984). Goths roamed dark streets and sang about Bela Lugosi. Ghosts and phantoms launched their hauntings from electronic and virtual spaces in the near future as much as from a distant past (William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, 1984). Older monsters, vampires in particular, were attractively rebranded as aesthetes, superheroes and cyborgs, past and future figures entwined in hybrid generic zones. Angela Carter's "Gothic times," a playful postmodern, consumer culture in which traditional aesthetic figures of desire, the uncanny and the unconscious circulate openly and freely, had more than materialized (Carter 1974: 122). Such visibility and liberal circulation is perhaps one reason why Fredric Jameson declared Gothic to be a "boring and exhausted paradigm" (Jameson 1991: 289). Maybe the plethora of monsters was just an effect of anticipation – apprehension.

After the millennium something would change, something new and truly monstrous would emerge. Only the date altered.

Perhaps the possibility of something new had already been exhausted by previous decades' demands for artistic, social and economic innovation, a demand for monstrosity stimulated and extinguished by processes of consumption. Perhaps monsters had become humanity's familiars, to the extent to which it was no longer possible to tell the difference. Indeed, questions of difference, of temporal progress and reversion, of Otherness and monstrosity, had already been posed in two texts discussing the "end of history" written in the last millennium. Jean Baudrillard, in *The Illusion of the End* (1992, 1994), opens a discussion of the disappearance of history with astronomical terms: "gravitational fields," "light speed," "escape velocity" imply that history fell into a black hole. Accelerated modernity had "liberated" humanity from space, time and reality, its exponentially rapid and pervasive circulation of bodies, messages and commodities leading to a fragmentation of meaning, identity and history. In the same process of multiplying and dislocating exchanges, Baudrillard identifies deceleration, an inertia rendering history incapable of either distance or forward momentum: "history, meaning and progress are no longer able to reach escape velocity," becoming absorbed in screens of silence and immanence, indifference and stupefaction (Baudrillard 1994: 4). Confounding of spatial and temporal categories, overturning causes and effects, the dissolution of linearity, gravity, directionality and meaning even dispatches any possibility of an end to history which "will not have time to catch up with its own end" (Baudrillard 1994: 4). Though a messianic and terroristic desire "to anticipate the end," and even hasten it, persists, Baudrillard charts another movement – the "reversal of history": sometime in the 1980s "things began to run in reverse," an end to linearity, futurity and ending, with modernity entangled in "a catastrophic process of recurrence and turbulence" (Baudrillard 1994: 10–11). Engaging more explicitly with Francis Fukuyama's post-historical claims and yet less ready to accept the disintegration of modernity's key institutions such as democracy, justice and humanity, Jacques Derrida's discussion of the new world order succeeding the break-up of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s nonetheless admits the difficulty of perceiving a future that is meaningful or progressive in a situation overwhelmed by neo-liberal rhetoric, new technologies and global commodification. *Specters of Marx* (1993, 1994) notes the "set of transformations" – "techno-scientifico-economico-media" – which exceed "the traditional givens of the Marxist discourse and those of the liberal discourse opposed to it" (Derrida 1994: 70). What questions, what modes of analysis, what kinds of thinking are able to address the extent and implications of global transformation and power given that the historical ground of thought has been displaced by technology, economy and media: subjects become spectral, bodies immaterial, presence, absence and actuality cede to virtuality, historical time is displaced by real time. Gaps, specters, discontinuities and disjunctions proliferate. Any future, it seems, is threatened with extinction. Addressing questions of politics, futurity and history requires, for Derrida, consideration of the structure of the transformed nature of the event, the mark of historical dis-continuity sustaining the possibility of some Thing to come, an *arrivant*, unpredictable, new, incalculable, even monstrous. In a situation of real-time global media screens and febrile heralding of novelty, however, what is to come is increasingly anticipated, predicted, named: the

arrivant is screened, that is, made visible and obscured (Derrida 1994: 65–66). What was once “monstrous” about any future – its unexpectedness, formlessness and namelessness – alters: the monstrosity that was obscurely but necessarily tied to humanity, its culture and its future, crucial in definitions of norms and boundaries, undergoes a transformation (Derrida 1978: 293; Derrida 1992: 35–36). As monsters are sought out, radical difference is diminished: they become familiar, recognized, expected, “normal” rather than “monstrous” monstrosities, domesticated to the point of becoming pets (Derrida 1992: 386). In Baudrillard’s interminable history, too, monstrosities appear to mark, not difference or Otherness, but an unbearable sameness collapsing on all forms and possibilities of identity. Where the “free” individual of modern, alienated subjectivity was prone to a vertical, schizophrenic madness linked to an excess of Otherness, the “identitary individual” – a “virtual clone” – suffers from a horizontal – and cultural – delirium due to an absence of Otherness. Evident in “genetic confusion,” scrambled codes and networks, “biological and molecular anomalies,” autism, this “delirium of self-appropriation” is “isophrenic” rather than schizophrenic; it absorbs double, shadow, image and other: “our monsters are all manic autists. As products of chimerical combination (even when this is genetic), deprived of all hereditary Otherness, afflicted with hereditary sterility, they have no other destiny than desperately to seek out an Otherness by eliminating all the Others one by one” (Baudrillard 1994: 109). Frankenstein is of this order: without Other “he craves Otherness.”

Without monstrosity, there is no millennium. Without a millennium, there are no monsters, no more. Perhaps the millennium already happened in the decades preceding it, in the many monsters they loosed. But, already too familiar, already thoroughly domesticated in the recyclings of history in reverse, these were only simulated species sought out by isophrenic individuals desperately seeking Otherness. Are there monsters amid the plethora of normal, domesticated, commodifiably differentiated, serialized and autoaffective figures so readily circulated before and after 2000 in, say, Anne Rice’s chronicles, Poppy Z. Brite’s fictions, *The Hunger* (T. Scott 1983), *Blade* (Norrington 1998), *The Addams Family* (Sonnenfeld 1991), *Buffy* (Whedon 1997–2003), *True Blood* (Ball 2008–) or *Twilight* (Hardwicke 2008)? Vampires moved forward and back in time to engage with concerns of infection, normality, technology, sexuality and, above all, identity. But, entwining genres of romance, adventure, SF, teen fiction and comedy, they increasingly reflected self and sameness more than monsters: in the guise of proclaiming attractive highly-tuned aesthetic, individualistic sensibilities, hybrid and cyborg flexibility and, primarily, corporate and consumerist differences, vampires paraded signs of specialness misunderstood, of talents and sufferings unrecognized, of selves unfound except as commodities (Botting 2008a, 2008b). Less attuned to the glamor of corporate marketing and posthuman possibility, werewolves struggled along, too corporeal, primitive – and hairy – for airbrushed simulation and refined identification, cast as antagonists in persistent myths of monstrosity (*Underworld*, Wiseman 2003) or cast into the wooded wilds of Scotland (*Dog Soldiers*, Marshall 2002). Glen Duncan’s *The Last Werewolf* (2011) ruminates on and from the position of the monster in genre fiction, contrasting lycanthrope and vampire: where the latter privilege themselves on their elevated mental faculties and refined tastes, the former is condemned to “dyslexia and a permanent erection” (Duncan 2011: 28). At least, the narrator

goes on, heightening the species antagonism, werewolves enjoy sexual activity. The contrast, however, extends to a familiar charting of vampiric associations with corporate culture: conspiring with the Catholic Church, they run huge businesses, exert powerful political influence and conduct all sorts of scientific experiments, sometimes employing Nazi genetic data. The world in which werewolves are hunted to extinction is one of careful monster management, with WOCOP (“World Organisation for the Control of Occult Phenomena”) existing as a quasi-autonomous unit: its members are sorry that the end of an era approaches, but, it seems, they have been taking measures to ensure employment prospects after the “last werewolf” is killed. For the urbane and witty protagonist, the end is not a concern: he is exhausted after 200 years of going through the motions, “sick and tired” of the same routines, “worn out by history, too full of content, emptily replete”. So much so that he cannot, he repeats, “take” any more life – his or others (Duncan 2011: 6–15). His resulting disinclination to avoid his fate at the next full moon is altered by an unexpected encounter with another, female, of his kind and it turns him, and the novel, from a jaded commentator on last things to a romantic action hero. Sex and death reanimate, and transform, the life of a genre monster. So much so that he is neither the last werewolf nor is the novel its final testament. Another monster series is born (*Talullah Rising*, 2012).

If the more spectacular and supernatural monsters play on, beyond exhaustion, into the seriality of romance and adventure, those banal, quasi-human creatures, like Frankenstein’s wretched reanimation, furnished with fewer aesthetic or physical powers, are curiously harder to spot. Not because they have been extinguished, but because their monstrosity, teetering at the limits of human norms that have been opened to all sorts of media, biological, surgical, genetic and cosmetic interventions, has been absorbed into cultural habits. A *New York Times* article recently argued that celebrities, their “trainwreck” lives splattered across screens and tabloid pages, function as contemporary Gothic heroines: disastrous relationships, overplayed emotional states, addictions, traumas, confessions and unstable behavior feeding scandal sheets to the point of making new, celebrity monsters, freak show spectacles of vice and prurient morality (Chocano 2011: 66). On reality TV, tabloid news and internet gossip sites, the exhibition of monsters appears relentless. “Victims” of botched surgical enhancements – or their own vanity – are paraded across glossy magazines or documentaries as inner and outer lives are subjected to voracious inspection. On a more banal level, as Bruce Sterling has suggested, Frankenstein’s monster is evident in emergency rooms and intensive care units (quoted in Johnson 1996: 101). Or in pharmacies, opticians and surgeries, anywhere, indeed, where the technology of the future supplements bodies in the present. If media spectacles perform traditional functions of monstrosity – the rendering visible and abhorrent of things abnormal, vicious or frightening – other sites of anxiety in a world suffused with miniaturized machines and (manufactured) micro-organisms are less easy to present: infections, viruses, genetic mutations, breaching social and corporeal bounds are terrifying in inverse proportion to their visibility. Yet they pervade the ecosphere all the same, in every breath, bite, sip or touch, just as every computer – open to millions of digital exchanges – can never easily separate communication from contagion. With biotechnological research, moreover, the capacity to transform bodies from within both absorbs and disarms the immediate shock of monstrous

presentation: monstrous – mutant – possibility is permanent if not manifest, a potentiality that may be emergent, anomalous, accidental or, more mundanely, incorporated in every exchange as part of the random fabric of codes and networks of daily life.

Marvelous monstrosity may be just around the corner, or pass unnoticed across the street. First published in 1997 as the last millennium approached, M. John Harrison's *Signs of Life* addresses the implications of biotechnological banality, providing a context to interrogate monstrosity beyond familiar generic parameters. The novel-length story centers on three characters living in London in the late 1980s–early 1990s, a realist account of jobs, friendships, love and separation told from a single perspective and detailing conversations, ambitions and habits in a time of rapid economic and political change: the Berlin Wall has just been torn down; eastern Europe is open for business; Yugoslavia is heading into turmoil; London, still haunted by the Thatcher years, is enjoying a boom: high-powered cars, branded clothing, fashionable restaurants and designer commodities are signs of the times. Relationships seem normal: two characters meet, fall in love, cohabit and painfully break up. One, from the start, speaks and dreams of flight. She leaves her partner for a man who is “going to help me to fly” (Harrison 2005a: 368). Flight – the context and form suggests – is a metaphor for achieving fulfillment and independence, a figure for her dreams of transcendence or self-discovery. As she takes the opportunity to undergo treatment, first in a London clinic and then in Florida, it seems these dreams are narcissistic. One comment, as she looks in the mirror on her return, suggests they pertain to body image and cosmetic enhancement: “I wish I’d had more done. My legs are still too fat” (Harrison 2005a: 415). Failing to recover, suffering fevers, sores, secretions and convulsions, her condition, and treatment, is revealed to have been more extensive and her desire for flight more literal than expected. Her ex-partner finds her curled up in a blanket having cut her wrists:

but first she had tried to shave the nascent feathers from her scalp, upper arms and breasts, hacking at the keratin until her skin was a mess of bruises and abrasions, indescribable soft ruby scabs, ragged and broken sheaths like cracked and bloody fingernails.

(Harrison 2005a: 444)

Becoming bird, growing feathers that would give the appearance, but not the ability, of a creature who could fly, her desire for flight is disclosed as more than fantasy or dream, more than metaphor: in tune with the advertising of the times, she tries to be who she wants to be. Flight is something to be made real. The pieces come together: the man with whom she had an affair was a specialist in genetic therapies. The brochures that litter her room speak of molecular biology’s “magic wand,” the ability to insert avian chromosomes into human skin cells. They also urge her to “Grow Your Way to Freedom.” She is allowed to choose her plumage, disappointing the young scientists of her design team who see her as much as a new brand as an experimental subject and hope for a more extraordinary appearance in keeping with “transgenic woman.” While enjoying virtual experiments with potential feather types on specially programmed software, she rejects their choice of colors (it “looks like a car”) but they “split the difference between Gaultier and *anime* art.” The

experiment is as much fashion, branding, marketing and computer design as it is science, medicine or therapy (Harrison 2005a: 448–49). Urgently returned to the clinic by her ex-partner, it is agreed that she be treated again. Given the extent of surgery and gene therapy her immune system cannot be repaired, nor can she be made human again: “she didn’t fucking want to be human” (Harrison 2005a: 456). Subjected to another round of medical and genetic interventions, her body on the brink of meltdown, she again resembles a bird: “intubated and strapped down, she fluttered and thrashed like a sparrow trapped in a room” (Harrison 2005a: 456). She survives and returns to London, accompanied by her ex-partner. The success of the operation is unclear, however: loyal and loving though he has shown himself to be, her partner leaves her, unable to bear the idea of being touched by her feathers. No description of her form is given, no account of her flight status: has her dream been fully realized, metaphor made biotechnologically literal? She remains unseen, site of speculation, a possible wonder, a real chimera, a magical, amazing and mundane monster of new biotechnology.

If her dream is realized biotechnologically, the other side of the story plots a different track: its nightmarish, ruinous capacity. *Signs of Life* recounts the parallel relationship between two friends and business partners who make money in the growing medical research sectors as couriers. Their ethics are highly questionable; they are ready to transport anything associated with new biotech, from organs, drugs, viruses, cells, vaccines, DNA, artificial antibodies and bloods and, later, “live hosts” (Harrison 2005a: 282). They also break the law, illegally dumping medical waste in a disused quarry, a site already rank with biochemical pollution. The context of free markets and consequences of commercial opportunity permeate the background: mentions of huge areas of nuclear contamination in the US (Hanford Reserve), the Budapest Treaty (regulating the patenting of micro-organisms) and TV reports about illegal wastes sites parallel encounters with East European medical couriers who are even less scrupulous in their ethics. The story ends with one partner in hiding in an idyllic wood close to his childhood home, a special place. When his partner visits it has been fenced off: a dump, leafless trees now draped in tangles of biohazard tape. He has, as is his wont, accelerated the risk of ruin: “the whole world is going to be like this soon” (Harrison 2005a: 472). While the narrator closes with a contrast of his two partners – a woman who refuses to give up on her dream of flight and the man who turns a special place into a nightmare – little distinguishes them within the broader process of economic and biotechnological transformation. Her change involves pain and suffering, fraught with “images of self-scarification” and of “body-horror.” Her experimental, excessive and illegal treatment turns her body into another waste dump: contaminated by “bacterial soups,” infections; her blood turned into “a junkyard of proteins” and her system nearing “total metabolic collapse” (Harrison 2005a: 456–57). Bodies of nature – the quiet Northern wood or the human form – cannot maintain their integrity in the face of so many comprehensive and ill-considered experiments, supplements, contaminants and expenditures. The distinction between dream and nightmare itself is torn apart: if monsters of corporeal and scientific transformation are part of this new daily reality, monstrosity – formless, emergent, nameless, global – lurks beyond the edges of the realist frame. Significantly, this is not a SF or a Gothic tale: the horrors, wonders, chimeras and monsters are – almost – assimilated to reality.

Flight provides a metaphor of new reality. Discussing the advent and implications of new technologies, Michel Serres (1993) develops the image of angels to extrapolate the sense of possibility and transformation: they are messengers of new states of being, of an artificial and intelligent city-world connected ethereally by webs of light and information. The “paradise” that is to come, however, means that angels are also found among the most wretched conditions and beings of the earth: future states depend on destitution, homelessness, poverty and ruin, states that are prophetic in their message, signs of life to come lived in code and light without body, nature, matter, history. The flight from matter and body to a dimension articulated and assembled in digital and genetic codes describes one trajectory of posthumanism. As N. Katherine Hayles describes it, posthumanism has the capacity to overwrite materiality, context and corporeality with its shift from presence and absence to the pattern and randomness provided by code. Immateriality and abstraction secedes from content and substance with information reified “into a free-floating, dematerialised, quantifiable entity” (Hayles 1999: 19). Taking its bearings from cybernetic and genetic research after WWII, this strand of posthumanism is plugged directly into capitalist thinking and practice: “when bodies are constituted as information, they can not only be sold but fundamentally reconstituted in response to market pressures” (Hayles 1999: 42). Waste and excess play a part in this process: developing William Burroughs’s notion of “junk,” Hayles notes how it enacts a reversal by selling not the product to the consumer but the consumer to the product: humans are very much secondary entities in the imperatives of post-industrial order, by-products if not waste products, redundant bodies drained of useful information and derogated as “meat.” *Signs of Life* presents a vivid account of what Hayles describes as the “nightmare” version of posthumanism, “a culture inhabited by posthumans who regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being” (Hayles 1999: 5). Science and business, their omnipresent tools and techniques of computing, marketing, branding, in the story, seem devoted to one thing: entrepreneurial and experimental creation aims only at profitable performance. If another version of posthumanism seeks emergent and differently embodied relationships that extend and multiply complexity and potential, *Signs of Life* offers few hints. Rather, it intimates another, horrifying conjunction in the enthusiasm with which bodily transformation is (digitally) imaged: that art now lies at the experimental forefront of biotechnical research and development. Transgenic art combines art for art’s sake with biology for biology’s sake: in erasing the bounds between human and transhuman, genetic creation opens the way for “extreme art” (akin to “extreme sports”) in which pitiless exhibitions express aesthetic-biological possibilities, a “necro-technology” leading to a limitless new teratology of creative experimentation (Virilio 2003:52–56).

Science, business, art conjoin. Monstrosity, it seems, moves beyond the trappings provided by Gothic or Science Fiction, becoming part of the everyday practice of experimentation, entrepreneurialism and existence: genetically recoded creations – chimeras, therapies and anomalies – are no more than things of design, fashion and entertainment. A novel about clones and organ transplantation, Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* (2005) is situated on the borders between science, business and art: the latter is set apart, held up as a way of distinguishing human value and creativity from cruel utility. Art produced and mysteriously exhibited by clones

is encouraged by more liberal and humane members of the clone management community: they aim to improve both the status and treatment of clones from that of lesser, abject beings without rights or self-determination and designed to service human needs with their lives. But the hope that art will somehow save them in the eyes of humans fails. The novel is not, M. John Harrison underlines, science fiction: “there’s no science here,” no discussion of the ways clones are kept alive post-operatively or of the people who can afford to have their own living medical resupply kit (Harrison 2005b: 26). Rather, the novel details the effective training, socialization and management of clones. There is no extrapolation of the implications of scientific discovery into the future, suggesting that extant technologies are enough to do the horrific job; there is no dystopian sense projected forward or back in a familiarly otherworldly manner: identified as an alternate post-WWII British society, the novel’s world is barely distinguishable from actuality. As Glennis Byron and Linda Ogston (2011) note, there are numerous parallels with *Frankenstein* (another novel where details of scientific and medical technique are minimal). Yet, in formal and stylistic terms, it has nothing of the Gothic novel about it: though unspeakable horror lurks at its edges, the story has none of the darkness, ruin, fear or terror employed in Gothic forms. Most of its parameters are realist. Told in understated tones from the perspective of a relatively self-satisfied clone whose status is only belatedly disclosed, the story details the institutional upbringing, relationships and unremarkable occurrences that amount to her life. Her “home” could be a boarding school, a care home or an orphanage. A familiar mix of naivety and curiosity surrounds child development and ideas of the outside world, with limited speculation on their future and more complicated attempts to discover origins. The recognizable contours of the world inside and beyond the institution are gently punctuated by the children’s easy use of unfamiliar terms that hint at something more disturbing than just jargon or community idiom: “carers,” “donors,” “donations,” “guardians,” “deferral,” “completions,” “possibles.” Their difference is only glimpsed in rare moments when they see themselves in the eyes of human others, in pity or fear (Ishiguro 2005: 32–35). The latter is registered, however, as disgust – likened to an abhorrence of spiders (Fluet 2007: 283). It marks their monstrosity as abject rather than terrible. Though they seem prepared if not fully aware of their function from a relatively early age, it is only later revealed that they have internalized human abjection: on an outing one finally utters the word “clone” along with “junk” and “trash” in a tone of self-loathing (Ishiguro 2005: 164). Even when they learn the truth, carefully withheld from them for years, they remain remarkably quiescent.

Sameness, however, dominates the telling of the story (Black 2009: 797). A familiarity of position, language and shared sense of the world is (mis)assumed between narrator and reader from the first pages (Robbins 2007: 291). It indicates not that the clones have been incorporated into a wider social world – far from it since they remain at large yet utterly excluded – but that they have thoroughly assimilated the role allotted them. Sameness, however, makes the novel all the more uncanny (Puchner 2008: 36): eschewing conventional – and all-too-formulaic – modes of evoking a sense of strangeness (which of course neutralize uncanny effects), the situating of unfamiliar beings in places assumed to be human increases a sense of disturbance, decomposing the frames giving reality its reality and introducing a thorough displacement of positions, expectations and assumptions. The evocation of

strangeness does more than question the treatment of those excluded from the designation “humanity”: it renders monstrosity relative, a matter of position, construction, attribution and misrecognition. Trained to be more humane, compassionate and caring than humans, their exclusion should be all the more horrific, though horror is nowhere registered in the novel itself. Indeed, monstrosity becomes reversible: objects of pity and rejection, the clones are less monstrous than the humans (no matter how liberal they try to be) who evince their monstrosity in their disgust. Yet even that reversal maintains an untenable difference between humans and monsters, an already and all-too-artificial difference obscured if not rendered obsolete scientifically and culturally by the evidence of cloning and the careful institutional construction of identity based on art and compassion. More than vainly asking who, what or where monsters are, the novel’s realist defamiliarization calls up and thwarts the question of that difference, not even caring (though “caring” is a major issue) that its trajectory also implies another question: how does one know, or if so, does one care, whether one is not already a clone?

The novel is not about cloning, but about “why we don’t explode, why we don’t just wake up one day and go sobbing and crying down the street, kicking everything to pieces” (Harrison 2005b: 26). One character’s explosive temper, like his drawings of chimeras and his subsequent suffering, suggests the extent of the anger kept at bay. But the question of human or clone does not matter: the greater concern is an ethical, or better, a political response that moves from anger and outrage to outbursts of resistance. Yet the quiescence of clones in the story and the un-familiar relation established with humans reading it presents a mirror of passivity, compliance and complicity that, ironically, tells a truth of cultural and political anesthesia, of a steady civil pacification and indifference inculcated in the later twentieth century. Perhaps the shock of recognizing human compliance and complicity in horrors documented but unnamed as such is designed to engender the horror the novel explicitly avoids making explicit. If the question of monsters in a context of post-human, technological and biopolitical innovation becomes a question of research aesthetics or banal indifference, then the question of humanity, too, is forsaken. The possibility of horror, anger or rage, however, might leave fears of monsters behind yet still register a faint appeal to higher powers (justice, rights) and thus retain an inchoate and vague sense of a monstrosity that cannot be identified or named. Though there be monsters no more, some kind of monstrosity may continue to haunt existence: in *Never Let Me Go*, the world beyond schools and hospitals remains unseen, but, its parallel history points to an order of governments and scientific research that has sanctioned the enslavement of clones; in *Signs of Life* (Erdman 2001–) a less organized world of markets and profits barely regulates the development and circulation of biotechnological innovations, vampire empire and zombie capitalism feeding off the bodies and desires of its subjects (Hardt and Negri 2000; Harman 2009). Perhaps there is reason to become angry.

“RAGE” is the name of a virus that, released from a medical research facility, rapidly infects – and re-infects – Britain, turning the population into frenzied, blood-thirsty and fast zombies in *28 Days Later* (Boyle 2002) and *28 Weeks Later* (Fresnadillo 2007). The first film begins with news footage of global violence, urban riots and mass conflict across the world; the second depicts London’s financial center as a re-purposed zone for repatriation and repopulation: refugees are returned to

this “Green Zone” under the surveillance of helicopters, snipers’ telescopic sights, command center cameras controlled by members (mostly US) of a UN security force. Bringing zombie horror’s link with mass contagion into the twenty-first century and associating it with global media, biopolitical surveillance, medical screening and military control, the distinctive acceleration of zombies suggests overreaction rather than anesthesia: it is as if their bodies explosively overreact to the superabundance of social, economic and informational pressures at large in global environments, rage, violence, negativity, destruction, horror the only response to an excess of signals, affirmations and imperatives, all calling for performance, creativity, innovation (Botting 2010a; 2010b). They are, it seems, permanently agitated by an over-saturated media and urban environment. Though still without the sentience, will or higher brain functions that characterized the emergence of the zombie in popular twentieth-century film, these “infected” are no longer the slow-moving mass associated in *White Zombie* (Halperin 1932) with the compliant, regimented and enslaved laboring classes serving the monstrous machinery of industrial production (Botting 2011). Nor are they, in the manner of George Romero’s walking dead, images of working masses made redundant and cast aside into living death by post-industrial capitalism’s shift from mass production toward consumption and immaterial labor (Beard 1993; Shaviri 2002). Bodies that shamle on in groups, regardless of a world that has passed them by, that relentlessly play out old habits of voracious consumption, remain – for all their visible abhorrence and abjection – too close to humanity in the vileness of their appearance and the uselessness of their obsolescent materiality: “they’re us,” as one character observes in *Dawn of the Dead* (Romero 1978). At the same time, to identify with a zombie, to recognize its human form or to show compassion is a futile and fatal gesture.

Zombie negativity is as ambivalent as it is uncontrollable. Beyond sense, meaning, reason, its passion for destruction goes nowhere, does nothing but consume (Botting 2012). As an image of global consumption – using up commodities, bodies, values and meanings – zombies present the excess of an already excessive system of social and economic exchanges, hastening globalized apocalypse in an imagined return to modern human values (family, work, nation) on the basis of near-total extinction (Max Brooks, *World War Z*, 2006). They are celebrated as the ultimate “passive-aggressive” figures of anti-capitalist resistance at the same time as they are exploited as desirable role models for entrepreneurial capitalism’s single-minded and callous wish to set profit above everything (Jasper Bark, *Way of the Barefoot Zombie*, 2009). Figures of corporate and consumer capital, promoted and reviled to excess, zombies also embody sharply-edged satires of romantic identification, traumatic self-absorption and identity politics (S.G. Browne, *Breathers*, 2009) or manifest the indecision of institutions like democratic government or social welfare, upsetting determinations of rights, management or legality (John Ajvide Lindqvist, *Handling the Undead*, 2009). Or they trawl the non-places – the airports, highways, suburbs and stadia – of the disappearing world, mirroring the weariness of human survivors yet incapable of shedding the habits that define them, without hope and horizon. The “posthuman” world is – post-apocalyptically – bitterly ironized as the “posthumous age” (Marion 2010: 70). Living after the end, zombies are neither human nor monstrous but remain revolting all the same. Without Otherness or difference they fester in indifference: exhausted, their lives and deaths reach a point that cannot be

left behind nor moved beyond. Neither angels nor cyborg-vampires but basely material, they embody not joyous states to come, but states, histories, beliefs and habits that recur with possibility of supercession, shadowy figures of a permanent and inescapable contemporaneity unable to achieve distance from itself and incapable of moving on. Unlikely post-millennial monsters, they are, it seems, very much a monstrosity of these times.

REFERENCES

- Baudrillard, J. (1994) *The Illusion of the End*, trans C. Turner, London: Polity Press.
- Beard, S. (1993) "No Particular Place to Go," *Sight and Sound*, 3.4: 30–31.
- Black, S. (2009) "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 55.4: 785–807.
- Botting, F. (2008a) *Gothic Romanced*, London: Routledge.
- (2008b) *Limits of Horror*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- (2010a) "Affect-less: Zombie-Horror-Shock," *English Language Notes* 48.1: 177–90.
- (2010b) "Zombie London: Unexceptionalities of the New World Order", in L. Phillips (ed.), *London Gothic*, London: Continuum, 153–71.
- (2011) "Zombie Death Drive: Between Gothic and Science Fiction," in S. Wasson and E. Alder (eds), *Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 36–56.
- (2012) "Love Your Zombie: Horror, Ethics, Excess," in J.D. Edwards and A.S. Monnet, *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture: Popgoth*, London: Routledge, 19–36.
- Byron, G. and Ogston, L. (2011) "Educating Kathy: Clones and Other Creatures in *Never Let Me Go*," in D. Olson (ed.) *Twenty-First-Century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels Since 2000*, Plymouth: Scarecrow, 453–66.
- Carter, A. (1974) *Fireworks*, London: Quartet Books
- Chocano, C. (2011) "How Tabloid Trainwrecks are Reinventing Gothic Literature," *New York Times*, September 2. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/04/magazine/tabloid-trainwrecks-reinventing-gothic-literature.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> (accessed November 28, 2012).
- Derrida, J. (1978) *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- (1992) "Passages – from traumatism to promise," in E. Weber (ed.), *Points . . . Interviews, 1974–1994*, trans. P. Kamuf *et al.*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 372–95.
- (1994) *Specters of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf, London: Routledge.
- Duncan, G. (2011) *The Last Werewolf*, Edinburgh: Canongate.
- Fluet, L. (2007) "Immaterial Labours: Ishiguro, Class, and Affect," *Novel* 40.3: 265–88.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Harrison, M.J. (2005a) *Anima: Signs of Life/Course of the Heart*, London: Gollancz.
- (2005b) "Clone Alone," *Guardian*, February 26. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/feb/26/bookerprize2005.bookerprize>> (accessed November 28, 2012).
- Harman, C. (2009) *Zombie Capitalism*, London: Bookmarks Publications.
- Hayles, N.K. (1999) *How We Became Posthuman*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Ishiguro, K. (2005) *Never Let Me Go*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Jameson, F. (1991), *Postmodernism*, London: Verso.
- Johnson, F. (1996) "Cyberpunks in the White House," in J. Dovey (ed.) *Fractal Dreams: New Media and Social Context*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 78–108.
- Marion, I. (2010) *Warm Bodies*, London: Vintage.
- Puchner, M. (2008) "When We Were Clones," *Raritan*, 27.4: 34–49.
- Robbins, B. (2007) "Cruelty is Bad: Banality and Proximity in *Never Let Me Go*," *Novel*, 40.3: 289–302.
- Serres, M. (1993) *Angels: A Modern Myth*, trans. F. Cowper, Paris: Flammarion.
- Shaviro, S. (2002) "Capitalist Monsters," *Historical Materialism*, 10.4: 281–90.
- Virilio, P. (2003) *Art and Fear*, trans. J. Rose, London: Continuum.

FURTHER READING

- Botting, F. (2003) "Metaphors and Monsters," *Journal for Cultural Research*, 7.4: 339–45. (An examination of monstrosity in theories of metaphor and code from Romanticism to Postmodernism.)
- Foucault, M. (2003) *Abnormal*, trans. G. Burchell, London: Verso. (Lectures delivered in the 1970s on the topic of sexuality, psychiatry and the discursive production of monstrosity.)
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2006) *Multitude*, London: Penguin. (Companion volume to *Empire* in which monsters, vampires and golem figure as images of new forms of capital and class power and creativity.)
- Lotringer, S. (1998) *Overexposed*, London: Paladin. (Interviews with sex clinicians developing techniques for the eradication of sexual deviation; contains a clear introduction on the decline of sexual and sacred monsters.)

INDEX



Literary works are noted under author name, where known; anonymously authored titles appear by title.

Films, television programmes, computer games and videogames, and plays are noted under title.

- Aboriginal people 68–9
- abuse: in childhood 74–5, 462, 463; of
women 404; *see also* sexual violence
- Addams Family, The* (Addams, 1964–6) 488
- Addison, Joseph 5–6, 16; “Present State of
War, The” 223; with Steele, R. *Santon
Barsisa* (*The Guardian*, 1714) 225, 226
- adolescent readers 259, 274
- Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA)
147
- aesthetics 444–5; *see also* picturesque, the;
taste
- Africa: and colonialism 63–4, 65; *see also*
orientalism; South Africa; *and under*
individual countries
- African-American writers 74; *see also under*
individual names
- agricultural change (in Britain) 99–100, 105
- Aikin, John *Treatise on the Situation,
Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany*,
A (English translation, 1777) xxxiii
- Ainsworth, William Harrison: *Auriol*
(1844–46) 266; *Rookwood* (1834) 264
- Akenside, Mark *Pleasures of Imagination*,
The (1744) 245
- alchemy 238–9
- Alexander and John Donaldson (publishers)
161
- Alice* (Svankmajer, 1988) 257
- Alice in Wonderland* (Burton, 2010) 256,
257
- Alien* (Scott, 1979) 143, 148, 396, 498
- alienation, feelings of 133, 136, 369, 402,
406, 409, 500
- All the Year Round* (Dickens, C. (ed.)) 266,
269
- Alleine, Joseph *Alarm to the Unconverted*
(1672) 244
- Amalgro & Claude* (1803) 186
- America 27–8, 29–30; anxiety and nature
28, 33, 64, 121–2, 123, 124–5, 130;
early settlers xxxv, 29, 33, 64, 69, 70,
123; landscapes 64, 123, 147; visual
culture 324–5; *see also* American
frontier; American Gothic literary
tradition; Native Americans
- American art 324–5
- American frontier xxviii, 28, 30, 33, 35, 64,
69, 124
- American Gothic literary tradition 27,
33, 121–2, 463; and the natural
environment 28, 33, 121–2, 123, 124–
5, 128, 130; *see also* environmental
literary criticism; Southern Gothic
literary tradition; suburban Gothic;
wilderness; *and under individual names*
- American Horror Story* (Murphy and
Falchuk, 2011–) 488
- American literature 28, 137; *see also*
American Gothic literary tradition
- American McGee’s Alice* (2000) 257
- American Revolution (1776) 29–30, 52, 78

- American Werewolf in Paris, An* (Landis, 1981) 394
- Amityville Horror* (Rosenberg, 1979) 137, 390
- Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities* 51–2
- angels *see* fallen angels
- Angles xxix–xxx, 5
- Anson, Jay *Amityville Horror* (1977) 137
- anti-Catholic sentiment 116–17, 186, 190, 501
- Anti-Jacobin Review* 172, 236–7
- antiquarianism 15–19, 20, 21–3, 24, 40, 43, *fig.* 2.1
- anxiety: and the Cold War 147, 382; cultural 221, 227, 316–7, 345; and family/home 74, 111; and the future of the human race xxv, xxviii, xlv; and the internet 143, 150, 152; and modernity 101, 110; and national security xlv, 30, 57, 63, 64, 98, 99, 135; and physical environments xli, 28, 33, 64, 121–2, 123, 124–5, 128; socio-economic 40, 59, 64, 98, 136
- “anxiety model” (Baldick and Mighall) 316–17
- apocalypse xxiv, xxv, xxviii, 139, 498, 507
- Arbus, Diane 419–20
- Archer, Simon 16
- arches *see* Gothic arches
- Aristotle *On the Generation of Animals* (4th C BCE) 368
- Arnaud, Baculard: *Les Amans malheureux, ou le Comte de Comminge* (1765) 225; *Les Épreuves du sentiment* (1773) 224
- Arnold, Samuel *Banditti, or Love’s Labyrinth, The* (1781) 192
- ARPANET 147
- art *see* painting; contemporary art; *see also under individual artists’ names*
- art exhibitions 325, 328, 332
- Asian Gothic 400, 401, 402, 406; *see also* southeast Asian Gothic tradition; *and under individual entries*
- Astwood, Margaret: *Lady Oracle* (1982) 305; *Negotiating with the Dead* (2002) 65; *Survival* (1972) 65
- Aubrey, John: “Chronologia Architectonica” (1671) 19; “Fashion of Windows in Civil and Ecclesiastical Buildings” (1762) 19
- Audition/Odison* (Miike, 1999) 404
- Austen, Jane:
 Northanger Abbey 159, 200, 205, 239; as parody of the Gothic 169, 174, 176–7, 231–2, 292; sale of copyright 163, *fig.* 25.1
 Pride and Prejudice (1813) 172
- Australia 65, 68–9
- authors 163; as author-protagonists 298–300, 305; female 164, 167, 168, 169, 207, *fig.* 14.2; male 167, 169, *fig.* 14.2; relationship with publishers 160–2, 163; *see also* writing, process of; *and under individual names*
- authors’ rights 161; *see also* copyright
- avatars 455, 456–7
- Awakening, The* (Murphy, 2011) 74–5
- Bach, J.S. *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* 433
- Bachelard, Gaston *Poetics of Space, The* (1958) xxxix
- Bacon, Nathaniel *Historical Discourse on the Uniformity of Government in England, An* (1647–51) 4–5
- Bad Seed, The* (LeRoy, 1956) 74, 385
- bad taste, association of Gothic with 445, 447, 448–9, 451
- Baillie, Joanna 172; *De Montfort* (1800) 360, *fig.* 30.2
- Bakhtin, Mikhail “Forms of time and of the Chronotope in the Novel” (1937–8) xli–xlii
- Baldick, Chris *Oxford Book of Gothic Tales, The* (1992) xli, 421–2
- ballads 190–2, 284; revival of 285
- Banim, John *Revelations of the Dead-Alive* (1824) 38
- barbarism xxxi, xxxiii–xxxiv, 10, 16, 21, 86, 243
- Barker, Clive 397
- Barlow, John Perry “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace” (1996) 144
- Barnes, Djuna *Nightwood* (1936) 136
- Barrett, Eaton Stannard *Heroine, The* (1813) 177, 292
- Barrett, Elizabeth 180
- Barruel, Abbé de *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du Jacobinisme* (1797–8) 30
- Barrymore, John 378, *fig.* 32.1
- Barthes, Roland 409

- Bass, Trystan L. 447
 Bath 480
 Baudrillard, Jean *Illusion of the End, The* (1992, 1994) 499, 500
 Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda *Gothic Imagination, The* (1982) 418
 Beauford, William 22
 beauty 86, 444–5, 451–2; *see also* picturesque, the
 Becket, Thomas 161
 Beckford, William 88–9, 92–3, 95, 96, 332, 479; *Azemia* (1797) 177; *Episodes* (of Vathek) 57; Fonthill Abbey 88, 92, 93, 94–5, 419, 479, *fig.* 8.2; Fonthill Splendens 92, 93, 94; *Vathek* (1786) 56–7, 89, 93–4, 180
 bees *see* swarming
 Behn, Aphra *History of a Nun, The* (1688) 190
 “belated Gothic” 299
 Bell, Thomas *Essay on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture* (1829) 22
 Bennett, John 175
 Beranger, Gabrielle 22
 Berlin, street theatre in 476
 Berners-Lee, Tim 149–50
 Bioshock (2007) 458
 Birney, Earle “Bushed” (1951) 65
Black Cat, The (Ulmer, 1934) 433, 437
 Black, H. and Larbalestier, J. (eds) *Zombies vs. Unicorns* (2010) 275
Blackmail (Hitchcock, 1929) 384
 Blackstone, William 9; *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–9) 203
 Blackwood, Algernon “Wendigo, The” (1910) 64, 70
Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine 169, 269
Blade (Norrington, 1998) 139, 395
 Blagdon, F. *Flowers of Literature* (1801–2) 173
Blair Witch Project, The (Myrick and Sánchez, 1999) 391
 Blair, Robert *Grave, The* (1743) 86–7, 211
 Blake, William 325, 336–7; *Ghost of a Flea, The* (c. 1819–20) 337, *fig.* 28.8
Blasted (Kane, 1995) 361
 Blatty, William Peter *Exorcist, The* (1971) 75
 Bloch, Robert *Psycho* (1959) 74; film adaptation (Hitchcock, 1960) 74, 383, 384–5
Blood on Satan’s Claw, The (Haggard, 1971) 388
Blue-Beard; Or, Female Curiosity (Colman the Younger, 1798) 289–90
 bluebooks 185, 343; illustrations in 344–5
 Boaden, James: *Fontainville Forest* (1794) 193, 328, 359, 360, 361; *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble* (1826) 360
 Bock, Baron de *Herrmann von Unna* (French translation of, 1791) 237
 body *see* human body
 Boies, Henry 349
Bones (Hanson 2005–) 492
 book illustrations 17, 19, 23, 24, 343–5, 346, *figs.* 2.1, 4.1; for book jackets 328–9
 book market 160, 163; *see also* publishing
 Booth, William *In Darkest England* (1890) 135
 Boothby, Guy: *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899) 66; “With Three Phantoms” (1897) 65
 Boucicault, Dion 193
 Bourgeois, Louise *Cell VII* 412, *fig.* 35.1
 Braddon, Mary Elizabeth *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) 264, 265, 266–7, 271–2
 Bradford, William 28
Bram Stoker’s Dracula (Coppola, 1992) 317, 394
 Brashare, Ann *My Name is Memory* (2010) 275
Breaking Dawn: Part 1 (Condon, 2011) 276–7, 279–80
Breaking Dawn: Part 2 (Condon, 2012) 280
 Brett, Edwin *Boys of England, The* (1866–99) 255
Bride of Frankenstein, The (Whale, 1935) 385
Bride, The (Roddam, 1985) 392
 Bristol 480
 Britain 10, 99–100, 105, 108; and colonialism 63, 369; early history of xxx–xxxi; relationship with France 221–4, 227, 231; inter-cultural exchange with Germany xxxviii, 231, 233, 234, 235, 236–7; and national identity 53, 99; and publishing industry 160–1; *see also* England; Ireland; Scotland; Wales
 Brite, Poppy Z. *Lost Souls* (1992) 137

- British empire 63–4, 66–7; decline of 69, 135; *see also* colonialism
- Britons, ancient xxx
- Britton, J. and Brayley, E. W. *Beauties of England and Wales* (1801–16) 23
- Brontë, Anne *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) 115–16
- Brontë, Charlotte: *Jane Eyre* (1847) 111, 116, 473; *Villette* (1853) 112, 116–18
- Brontë, Emily *Wuthering Heights* (1847) 111, 115, 445
- Brooks, Max *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* (2006) xxiv–xxvii, xxxvi, 139
- Brown, Charles Brockden 27–8, 30–2; *Alcuin* (1798, 1815) 34; *Arthur Mervyn: Or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799, 1800) 27, 29, 33, 34; *Clara Howard* (1801) 31; *Edgar Huntly: Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker* (1799) 27, 31, 32–3, 123–4; *Jane Talbot* (1801) 31; *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* (1803–5) 30; *Ormond: Or, the secret witness* (1799) 27, 29, 30, 31, 33–4, 35; “Somnambulism” (1805) 33; *Wieland: Or The Transformation. An American Tale* (1798) 27, 31, 32, 34–5
- Browne, Hablot *see* Phiz
- Brunton, Mary 46
- Buell, Lawrence *Environmental Imagination, The* (1995) 122
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Whedon, 1997–2003) 278, 281, 318, 490–2
- Bunbury, Henry William “Little Grey Man, The” (1801) 285
- Bürger, Gottfried August 191–2
- Burgess, Melvin: *Bloodtide* (1999) 259; *Junk* (1996) 259
- Burke, Edmund 73; *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, A* (1757) 41–2, 73, 172; *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) 205–6, 237
- burlesque 285, 287, 288, 290; *see also* parodies
- Burns, Robert 45; “Tam O’Shanter” (1791) 46
- Burns, Sarah *Painting the Dark Side* (2004) 324–5
- Burton, Tim 308, 388; *see also under individual film titles*
- Byfield, Mary “Socivizca roasting two Turkish prisoners” (1825) 345–6, *fig.* 29.2
- Byron, Lord 89; *Fragment, A* (1819) 194
- Cabinet of Dr Caligari, The* (Weine, 1920) 74, 379–80
- Cable, George Washington *Strange True Stories of Louisiana* (1888) 137
- Cagliostro, Count 238, 239
- Caine, Rachel ‘Morganville Vampires’ series (2006–) 281
- Camden Society 16, 18
- Canadian wilderness 64–5
- Candyman* (Rose, 1992) 397
- cannibalism 275, 304, 323, 333, 343, *fig.* 29.1
- Cape Town, post-colonial 137
- capitalism 88, 138, 139, 316, 372, 507; *see also* consumerism
- Caraccioli, Louis-Antoine *Advice from a Lady of Quality* (1769) 175
- Carlyle, Thomas 179, 180, 234
- Carrie* (De Palma, 1974) 394
- Carroll, Lewis *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) 256
- Carter, Angela 498; “Alice in Prague or The Curious Room” (1993) 257
- Carter, Elizabeth 179
- Carter, John 20
- Cast, P.C. and Kristin ‘House of Night’ series (2007–13) 275–6
- castle architecture xlii, 8, 91, 106, 107, 147, 208, 417; in television adaptations 491–2; Welsh 21–2; *see also* fortifications; ruins
- Castle on the Rock* (Anon., 1808) 250
- castration 299, 300, 304
- Cat People* (Tourneur, 1942) 383
- cathedrals 8, 414
- Catholicism 21, 22, 40–1, 44–5, 56, 99, 102, 107, 117, 310; *see also* anti-Catholicism
- Cave, Nick *Murder Ballads* (1996) 431
- cellphones 152–3, 400–1
- Celtic countries xxxiv–xxxv, 44, 204; *see also under individual countries*
- Celtic heritage 204; *see also under individual countries*

- Chaney, Lon 381
chapbooks 185–7, 260, 269, *fig.* 16.1; critics
of 188; middle-class readership of 188;
morality tales within 188; working-
class readership of 185–6, 187–8
Chesnutt, Charles *Conjure Woman, The*
(1899) 127
child abuse 74–5, 462, 463
children's books 254, 258–62
development of 243–4, 260
Gothic 244–5, 246, 247–8, 250–2,
254; disapproval of 244–5, 249–50,
256, 261; 21st century 254, 258–9,
259–62
and horror 261
with educational aims 245–6
realism in 259
religious 243, 247, 251
see also young readers *and under*
individual authors' names
China 400
Chinese literature 215, 399
chivalry 7, 18, 202, 204, 207
Chomon, Segundo de 377
church architecture *see* ecclesiastical
architecture
Church of England 16
cinema, early development of 352, 375, 376;
see also film
circulating libraries 160, 164, 166, 266
cities 63, 132–4, 139; *see also* urban
environments; urbanization; *and under*
individual entries
Civil Rights movements 74
Clairmont, Claire 179, 181
Clarke, Cat *Entangled* (2011) 275, 281
Clarke, Harry “Morella” in Poe, E. A. *Tales*
of Mystery and Imagination (1908)
346, *fig.* 29.3
Classic of Mountains and Seas/Shanhai Jing
399
claustrophobia xli, 132, 136, 299, 300, 361,
397, 422, 423
Clifford, Lucy Lane “New Mother, The”
(1882) 256–7
Clock Tower 3 (2003) 459
clones 505–6
clubbing 437; *see also* music
Colburn's New Monthly Magazine (1819)
266
Cold War, the 69, 147, 382
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 235; *Biographia*
Literaria (1817) xxxix–xl, 235;
“Christabel” (1816) 213–14; review of
The Monk (*Critical Review*, Feb. 1797)
177, 178, 293; “Rhyme of the Ancient
Mariner, The” 191, 213
Collins, Wilkie 112
Evil Genius, The (1886) 112, 115, 116
Woman in White, The (1860) 264, 265,
268; serialization of 266, 269–71
Colman the Younger, George: *Blue-Beard*;
Or, Female Curiosity (1798) 289–90;
Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh; Or The
Rovers of Weimar (1811) 290
colonialism 58, 63–4, 66–7, 69, 70, 123;
and landscapes 106–8; and America
123
comedy: and Gothic poetry 214, 216; and
television adaptations 490–1, 495; in
theatrical performances 354, 357
comic opera 357
composite photograph 350–1
computer games xxv–xxvi, 454–6; playing
online 455, 457; *see also* videogames
Conan Doyle, Arthur: *Sign of Four, The*
(1890) 65–6; “Speckled Band, The”
(1892) 66
Conrad, Joseph *Heart of Darkness* (1899)
65, 66, 135; *Tales of Unease* (1898) 65
consumerism xl, 244, 251, 280, 304, 318,
352, 401, 417, 443, 450, 479, 484,
504; and self-expression 444, 448, 449,
452; *see also* capitalism; goth lifestyle;
Gothic tourism; taste
contemporary art 412–13, 420
Conway, Henry 91
Cook, Florence 374
Cooke, Thomas Potter 347, 349, *fig.* 29.4
Cooper, Austen 22
Cooper, James Fenimore 124
copyright 161, 163
Corman, Roger 376
“Corsican trap” 362
Cotman, J.S. and Turner, D. *Architectural*
Antiquities of Normandy (1822) 21
Cox, Constance Maria Marten: *Or, Murder*
in the Red Barn (1969) 357
Crèvecoeur, J. Hector St John de *American*
Farmer, An (1782) 28
crime 112, 113, 357; and television series
492–3; *see also* criminal anthropology

- criminal anthropology 349–50, 369
 Cronin, Justin: *Passage, The* (2010) xxviii, xxxvi; *Twelve, The* (2012) xxix
 Crookenden, Isaac 188; *Distressed Nun, The* (1802) 188
 Crookes, Sir William 374
 Crowe, Catherine *Night Side of Nature, The* (1848) 367
 CSI franchise (Zuiker, 2000–) 492
Cube (Natali, 1997) 397
 Cullen, Stephen *Castle of Inchvally* (1796) 44
 Curry, John 40
 Curties, T.J. Horsley *Watch-Tower, The* (1803–4) 43
 Cuthbertson, Catherine *Romance of the Pyrenees* (1803) 163; serialization of (1804–7) 266
 cybergothic 143, 148, 150, 152, 153
 cyberporn 150
 cyberpunk 138, 150
 cyberspace 143, 149; and terrorism 151

 Dacre, Charlotte: “Grimalkin’s Ghost; Or, The Water Spirits” (1805) 288; *Zofloya: Or, the Moor* (1806) 58–9, 167
 dance 437, 438; *see also* music
Dark Shadows (Curtis 1966–71) 488
 dark tourism *see* Gothic tourism
 DARPA *see* Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA)
 Darwin, Charles 126, 369; evolution, theory of 134; *Origin of Species* (1859) 369
 De Quincey, Margaret 180
Dead Space (2008) 457–8
 Deane, Hamilton 348, 349
Death and the Maiden (Dorfman, 1990) 361–2, 363–4
 death: and the adolescent female body 275, 276–8, 279, 281; and poetry 211–12, 215, 217–19; symbolic 276–7; and young adult literature 275–8; and vampires 494–5; *see also* resurrection
 decadence 64, 466, 468, 469
 decay 134–5, 349, 389, 422; of the body 396–7; psychological 135–6; social 128, 134, 468; urban 132–3, 134, 138, 139; *see also* ruins
 deformed/disabled bodies xliii, 150, 377
 degeneration *see* decay
 DeLillo, Don *Falling Man* (2007) 79–80

Deliverance (Boorman, 1972) 129
 Derby, England 480
 Derrida, Jacques 98, 99, 430, 432; *Specters of Marx* (1993, 1994) 372, 499–500
Devil May Cry (2001–) 457
 devil, the 28, 58–9, 125, 195
 Dickens, Charles 169, 267, 342, 343
 publications: *All the Year Round* (ed.) 266, 269; *Bleak House* (1852–53) 112, 267, 268, 343, 350; *Chimes, The: A Goblin Story* (1844) 251; *Christmas Carol, A* (1843) 114, 251; “Christmas Tree, A” (1850) 372; “Demeanour of Murderers, The” 350; *Great Expectations* (1861) 267–8; *Haunted Man, The* (1848) 112, 114–15, 370–1; *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) 113; *Oliver Twist* (1837–8) 113, 267; *Pickwick Papers* (1836–7) 267
 serializations 267
 stage adaptations of 370–1
 television adaptations of 489
 Dickey, James *Deliverance* (1970) 129
 Dickinson, Emily 125
 Diderot, Denis *La religieuse* (1796) 226
 digital technology 152–3, 391, 400–1, 407–8, 498; *see also* internet, the
 Dinocourt, Théophile *Le Conspirateur* (1826) 221, 223
 diseases xxvi, xxviii, 27, 29, 139
 DJ-ing 434
Doctor Who (Newman, 1963) 489
 domestic abuse 404
 domestic environments 110–11, 114–15, 117; and anxiety 111; and sensation fiction 265; and terror 110–12, 488; and the uncanny 89, 98, 117, 402, 407–8, 409, 448
 domestic servants 291
Donaldson v. Becket (1771) 161
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Mamoulian, 1931) 436–7
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Robertson, 1920) 378, fig. 32.1
Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde (Baker, 1971) 394
Dracula (Browning, 1931) 381, 382
 Dracula, Count (character) 63, 65, 303, 308, 316–19, 350, 380, 391, 392, 394
Dracula (Lenkiewicz, 2012) 308–9
 Drake, Nathan “On Gothic Superstition” (1790) 205

- Dread* (DiBlasi, 2009) 74
 Drew Richard “Falling Man” photograph 79–80
 Ducarel, Andrew Coltée *Anglo-Norman Architecture* (1767) 21
 Dugdale, William: *History of St Paul’s Cathedral* (1658) 16, 19; *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655) 16–17, 18
 Duncan, Glen *Last Werewolf, The* (2011) 500–1
 Dunlop, John Colin 224
 Eagles, Robin *Francophilia in English Society, 1748–1815* (2000) 227
 East Asian Gothic 399, 403
 ecclesiastical architecture 18, 19, 87, 91, 414, 417, 418; *see also* monastic architecture *and under individual entries*
 ecocriticism *see* environmental literary criticism
 ectoplasm 374
 Edgeworth, Maria 167; *Castle Rackrent* (1800) 291; *Ennui* (1808) 46; *Parent’s Assistant, The* (1796) 247; “Grateful Negro, The” (from *Popular Tales*, 1804) 247–8; *Practical Education* (with Edgeworth, R. L., 1798) 174, 175, 245, 247, 248–9
 Edward I, King of England 21
 Edwards, Jonathan *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741) 29
 Egypt 66
 eidophusikon 93, 325, 367
 Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) 148
 “Elephant Man, The” 368–9
 Elfman, Danny 435
 Eliot, T. S. *Waste Land, The* (1922) 136
 Ellis, Brett Easton *Lunar Park* (2005) 305
 Ellis, Havelock 350; *Criminal, The* (1890) 351
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo 124, 125
 England: 18th C landscape changes 99–100; relationship with France 223–4, 227; arrival of Germanic tribes in xxix–xxx, 5, 415; government of 4–5, 9–10; landscape of 104–5; and national identity 98–9, 202–3, 223; publishing industry in 161; Saxon xxix–xxx
 Enlightenment, the xxxiii, 23, 35, 43, 51, 57, 413, 417, 424; in Germany 232, 233–4
 entrapment *see* imprisonment
 environmental Gothic 121–3, 129, 130; *see also under individual authors’ names*
 environmental literary criticism 122–3
 environments: domestic 89, 98, 110–12, 114–15, 117, 265, 402, 407–8, 409, 488; maritime 126; natural 121–2, 124–5, 128, 130; online 143–4, 150, 152, 153, 469, 457; urban 63, 113–14, 124–5, 132, 371; *see also* wilderness
 eroticism: and orientalism 58; and vampire films 277, 279, 332–3, 346, 393–4, 494, *fig.* 33.1; in the visual arts 329–30, 332–3, 416; *see also* cyberporn; death; sexuality
 Essenbach, Wolfram von 329
 Essex, James 19, 20
 European Gothic tradition 20, 27, 31, 62, 70, 98, 124, 126, 127, 310; ballads 190–2; opera 192, 356–7
 Evelyn, John 16
Evil of Frankenstein, The (Francis, 1964) 392
 evolution, theories of 73, 134, 135, 349; and degeneration 135, 349; and racial difference 369
 exhibitions *see* art exhibitions
Exorcist, The (Friedkin 1973) 75, 384, 396
 exoticism 56, 58, 66; *see also* orientalism; Otherness
 exploration 67; *see also* travel
Eye, The (Pang Brothers, 2002) 401
 Fabre, Jean 223
 Facebook 153
 fairy tales 245, 249, 256
 fallen angels 275
Fantasmagoriana (1818) 390
 fantasy paintings 331
 fashion 444, 450
Fatal Frame (2001) 458, 459
Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins (Anon., 1803) 186, *fig.* 16.1
 Faulkner, William: *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) 128; *As I Lay Dying* (1930) 128; *Go Down, Moses* (1942) 128; *Light in August* (1932) 128; *Sound and the Fury* (1929) 128; *Wild Palms, The* (1939) 128
 female authors 164, 167, 168, 169, 314, 315, *fig.* 14.2; and romance fiction 199–200; *see also under individual authors’ names*

- female readers 164, 173, 174–5, 315; and
romance fiction 199–200, 292
- feminism and feminist theory 74, 115,
314–15
- Fenwick, Eliza *Secresy, or The Ruin on the
Rock* (1795) 207
- feudalism 7, 105, 106, 204, 206–7, 371
- fiction 177–8; market growth 159, 164,
166, *fig.* 14.1; publishing costs 162–3;
serialization 169, 265–7, 268, 269–71;
see also Gothic fiction
- film 74, 376; aimed at teen market 279;
music/sound in 433; *see also* horror
films; soundtracks; *and under*
individual titles
- fin-de-siècle* 498
- Fitzball, Edward *Flying Dutchman, The*
(1827) 360
- Fitzpatrick, Becca *Hush, Hush* (2009) 277–8
- Fleenor, Juliann *Female Gothic, The* (1987)
314
- Fleming, Marjorie 246
- Flesh for Frankenstein* (Morrissey and
Margheriti, 1973) 392
- Flores Historiarum* 284
- Fly, The* (Cronenberg, 1986) 397
- Foer, Jonathan Safran *Extremely Loud and
Incredibly Close* (2005) 76–7
- “folk Gothic” 46
- folklore 66, 203, 317, 332, 371, 373
- Fonthill Abbey 88, 92, 93, 94–5, 419, 479,
fig. 8.2
- Fonthill Splendens 92, 93, 94
- foreign translations *see* translation
- foreignness 173; *see also* Otherness
- forests 123, 126
- fortifications 145–6, 147
- Foucault, Michel “Language to Infinity” 424
- Foulet, M. *L’Italien, ou le Confessionnal des
Pénitents noirs* (1797) 222
- Fox, Charles *Boys’ Standard, The* (1875–92)
255
- Fox, Katherine and Margaret 373
- France: and anglo-French cultural exchange
xxxvii, 222–3, 224, 227, 231; Gothic
architecture in 21; military fortifications
in 145, 146; political landscape 237–8;
relationship with Britain 52, 53, 221,
223–4, 227; *see also* French literature;
French Revolution (1793–1802)
- Frankenhooker* (Henenlotter, 1990) 392
- Frankenstein* (Boyle and Dear, 2011) 360, 363
- Frankenstein* (Dawley, 1910) 377–8
- Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931) 385
- Frankenstein Created Woman* (Fisher, 1967)
392
- Frankenstein Syndrome, The* (Tretta, 2010)
392
- Frankenstein, Victor (character) xliii, 144,
195, 316, 360, 378
- Frankenstein’s creature/monster (character)
xliii, 144, 258, 316, 346, 359, 360,
363, 377–8, 392
- Frankenweenie* (Burton, 2012) 308
- freak shows 367, 368–9
- Frederick the Great 146, 237
- French literature 31, 231; influence on the
British Gothic tradition 224–5, 226;
popularity of Gothic fiction 222, 223;
literary criticism of British novels 221,
227; “sentimental” 224, 225; *see also*
French translations (of British Gothic
fiction)
- French Revolution (1793–1802) 52, 53,
73, 166, 172; English responses to
205–6; and German literature 237;
representation in the visual arts 333,
334, *fig.* 28.6
- French translations (of British Gothic
fiction) 222–3, 227, 231
- Freud, Sigmund: Oedipal theory 74, 134,
136, 145, 400; and psychoanalytic
theory 313–14, 375, 438; the uncanny
133, 401, 438, 439
- Freund, Karl 382
- Friday the 13th* (Cunningham, 1980) 396
- Friston, David Henry 346
- Fury, The* (De Palma, 1974) 394
- Fuseli, Henry 325, 331–2, 416–17
paintings: *Ezzelin and Meduna* (1784) 328;
Lady Macbeth Sleepwalking (1781–4)
329; *Nightmare, The* (1783) 323,
328, 329–30, 416, 417, 421, *fig.* 28.4;
*Percival Delivering Belisane from
the Enchantment of Urma* (1783) 329,
fig. 28.3
represented in film 329, 390
use for book jackets 328–9
- “Gabrielli” *see* “Mrs Meeke”
- Gaiman, Neil 258–9; *Coraline* (2002)
256–7, 259

- Galton, Sir Francis 350–1, 369
 gaming *see* computer games; videogames
 Gan Bao In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record/Sou-shen Chi (350 AD) 399
 Garcia, Kami and Stohl, Margaret *Beautiful Creatures* (2009) 275
 Geisweiler, Constantin 235–6
 gender roles 56, 135, 211, 265, 374, 492
 Genlis, Madame de “letters on education” 192
 geography 98–9, 102; and imagery 102–4, 105, 479; *see also* agricultural change (in Britain); landscape
 German Expressionism 379–80, 381–2, 383–4
 German literature 173, 233, 235; and popularity of ballads 191; relationship with British Gothic taste 191–2, 232, 234, 310; British readers’ responses to 234, 235, 236–7; criticism of 234, 236–7; Gothic novels 231–2, 233–4; and romance fiction 31, 232, 310; *see also* German translations (of British Gothic fiction)
 German translations (of British Gothic fiction) 191–2, 227, 232, 236, 239
 “German School”, the 232
 Germany xxxvii; and anglo-German cultural exchange 231–2, 233, 239; Enlightenment philosophy of 232, 233–4; and filmmakers 382; Gothic architecture in 21, 233; as origin of Gothic tribes xxix–xxx, xxxiii; secret societies 237–8; *see also* German literature
 ghost hunting tours/“experiences” 480, 481–3, 484
 ghost stories 70, 112, 113, 194, 366, 371, 372, 417; television adaptations of 487, 489
 ghost walks 480
 ghosts xl, 76, 134, 215, 232, 366, 371–3; in children’s literature 245, 250; female 404, 406–7, 409; and Gothic tourism 476–7, 479–80; in horror films 377, 389, 390–1, 400–1, 404, 408; in novels 46, 78, 117, 193–4, 275, 366; in southeast Asian Gothic literature 399; and sound 429–30; staging of 194, 360; vengeful 399, 406; *see also* folklore; spirits
 Gibbons, Edward *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, The* (1776–89) 64
 Gibson, William *Neuromancer* (1984) 138, 149, 498
 Gifford, William 172
 Gillray, James: *Tales of Wonder!* 175, 328, *fig.* 15.1; *Un Petit Souper, à la Parisienne* (1792) 333, *fig.* 28.6
 Gilman, Charlotte Perkins *Yellow Wallpaper, The* (1892) 73
 Gilpin, William 23, 44; *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1788) 41
Ginger Snaps (Fawcett, 2000) 394
 Godwin, Mary *see* Shelley, Mary
 Godwin, William 29, 45, 249–50; *Caleb Williams* (1794) 31, 54–5, 144, 166, 172, 206–7; *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) 54; “Juvenile Library” 249–50; *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1803) 85–6; *Things as they Are* (1794) xliii
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 233
Going Home (Chan, 2002) 401, 402, 406–8, 409, *fig.* 34.2
Gok’s Style Secrets (2013) 450–1
Golem, The (Wegener and Galeen, 1915) 382
 Gorey, Edward 258
 goth lifestyle 441–2, 443–4; *see also* fashion
 goth subculture 279, 443–4, 447; and fashion 452; and music 429
Gothic (Russell, 1984) 329, 390
 Gothic antiquities 15–19, 24, *fig.* 2.1; *see also* antiquarianism
 Gothic arches 19–20, 21, *fig.* 28.5
 Gothic architecture 8, 18–20, 85–6, 323, 413, 457; and antiquarianism 16–20, 21–3; *fig.* 2.1; and barbarism 16; drawings/illustrations of 17, 19, 23, 24, 327, *figs.* 2.1, 4.1, 28.5; and ecclesiastical buildings 18, 19, 414, 417, 418; and English nationalism 16, 20, 21; as a European style 20–21; inspiring literature 86, 88–9, 417; interiors 113; in Ireland 21–2; publications on 18–19; revivalist 323, 413, 417, 418–19, 445, 449; in Scotland 22–3; and tourism 479; in

- Wales 21–2; *see also* castle architecture; medieval architecture; monastic architecture; ruins
- “Gothic”: definitions of 416, 417–18, 419, 422; origins of the term 414–15
- Gothic fiction xlv–xlv, 25, 72, 74–5; African-American 74, 127–8; inspired by architecture and landscape 86, 88–9, 98–9, 102; feminist 74; market development 159–60; perceived moral dangers of 172, 173, 177, 178, 199–200, 239; negative opinions of 166, 173, 182; origins of xxxvi–xxxvii; publishers of 166–7; and trauma 72, 73, 75; *see also* “folk Gothic”; Gothic romance novels; *and under individual authors’ names*
- Gothic Martha Stewart* (website) 447
- Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (Tate Britain, 2006) 416–17
- Gothic novel, the 15, 31, 111, 342–3
illustrations in 346
and imagination 175, 176, 178, 205 239
influence on German literature 231–3, 234
perception of morally corruptive nature of 177, 178
popularity of: declines in 168, 172, 174, 176–7, 188, 204; in France 222, 225, 227; growth in 164–5, 166
readership of 180, 179
stage adaptations of 348
see also Gothic fiction; Gothic romance novels; sensation fiction; *and under individual entries*
- Gothic Revival (19th C) 24; architecture 323, 413, 417, 418–19, 445, 449
- Gothic romance novels 30, 31, 43, 46, 98, 145, 147, 200–1, 205, 208, 224, 271, 311; criticisms of 182, 199; and English national identity 202–3; and literary realism 201–2; perceived moral and political dangers of 172, 173–6, 177, 178, 199–200, 205, 239; reader stereotypes 174–5, 176, 180; influence of Shakespeare 203–4, 205; *see also* Gothic fiction; romance fiction; *and under individual authors’ names*
- Gothic theory 309–12; and feminism 314; and psychoanalytic theory 313–14
- Gothic tourism 21, 23, 135, 476–7, 478–9, 480–1
- Gothic tribes: arrival in Britain xxix–xxx, 5, 415; geographical origins of xxix–xxx, xxxiii; movements of xxx, xxxii–xxxiii, 415; *see also* swarming
- “Gothick appeal” xxx
- “Gothick balance” xxix
- gotico* 413
- Gough, Lucy *Head* (1996) 358, 360, 362–3
- Gough, Richard 20
- government 5, 8, 9–10, 203
- Goya, Francisco 324; *Los Caprichos* (1799) 334–5, *fig.* 28.7; *Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters, The* (c.1797–80) 416; *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (1810–20) 334
- Grand Designs* (television series) 448–9, *fig.* 37.2
- Grand Tour, the 20, 21
- “Graveyard poetry” 211–12, 213
- Gray, Thomas “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751) 87
- Green, Thomas 179, 180
- Greenwood, James 261
- Grimm, the Brothers *Kinder- und Hausmächen* (1812) 249
- Grogan, Nathaniel 326
- Grose, Francis: *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1772–76) 22, *fig.* 2.1; *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790) 22; *Antiquities of Scotland* (1789) 22
- Grosse, Karl: *Der Genius* (1790–4) 233; *Horrid Mysteries* (1796) 231
- Grunenberg, Christoph 149; *Gothic* exhibition/catalogue (1997) 420
- Gurney, Elizabeth 177
- hackers 145, 148, 150
- Haggard, Henry Rider 66; *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) 66–7, 68; *She* (1886) 67
- Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) 52
- Hall, Sir James 21
- Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978) 396
- Halloween 444, 478
- Halperin, Victor 385
- Hamilton, John Mortimer 326
- Hammer Horror 346, 376, 391–2, 393, 395
- Hammer *House of Horror* (Skeggs, 1980) 488

- Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense* (Skeggs, 1984) 488
- Harding, Giles *Florence and Giles* (2010) 466, 472–4
- Harris, John 250
- Harrison, Kim “Madison Avery and the Dim Reaper” (2009) 278
- Harrison, M. John *Signs of Life* (1996) 502–3, 504
- Haunted Castle, The* (Méliès, 1896) 377
- Haunted House, The* (Chomon, 1908) 377
- haunted houses 70, 137, 144, 149, 374; and film 74, 377, 381, 389–90, 391
- Haunting Ground* (2005) 459
- Haunting, The* (Wise, 1963) 389
- hauntology 372; and sound 432–4
- Hawksmoor, Nicholas 18
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel 124; “Roger Malvin’s Burial” (1832) 125–6; “Young Goodman Brown” (1835) 125
- Heidegger, Martin 438–9; *Being and Time* (1927) 439
- Hellraiser* (Barker, 1987) 397, fig. 33.2
- hero, the 40, 43, 78, 206, 292; and stage adaptations 359–60; and survival horror 459–60; and videogames 458
- heroine, the 34, 35, 40, 46, 62, 103, 292, 298, 314, 473, 501; and abduction/imprisonment narratives 116, 265, 297; and death 276, 277, 278–9, 281, 293; and stage adaptations 359; and survival horror 459–60; and television programmes 490, 492, 494
- Higgins, F. E. *Tales from the Sinister City* (2007–11) 258, 260
- Highway, Tomson *Kiss of the Fur Queen, The* (1998) 70
- Hill, Susan *Woman in Black, The* (1989) 360–1
- History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (Anon., 1764) 243, 244
- history xxxiii, xxxviii, 7, 10, 41, 47, 48, 219, 258, 310, 409, 422, 423, 499, 500; and national identity 6, 9, 40, 101, 202, 204, 402, 404; *see also* antiquarianism
- Hitchcock, Alfred 383–5; *see also under individual film titles*
- Hodgson, William Hope *Night Land, The* (1912) 133
- Hoffmann, Heinrich *Struwwelpeter* (English translation, 1848) 251, 259
- Hogg, James: “Adam Bell” (1825) 48; *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, The* (1824) 41, 47, 169, 328; “Superstition” (1815) 212
- Holcroft, Thomas 55; *Tale of Mystery, A* (1802) 193; stage adaptations of 357, 363
- Hollar, Wenceslaus: drawings of Old St Paul’s 19
- Holst, Theodore von 346
- home *see* domestic environments
- homosexuality 57, 74, 90–1, 93, 392, 393, 465–6
- Hong Kong 407–8
- horror films xlii, 341, 376, 377–8, 388–9; and digital technology 391, 400–1, 407–8; influence of German Expressionism 379–80, 381–2, 383–4; southeast Asian 400, 404; *see also* J-Horror; K-horror; *and under individual entries*
- horror xxv, xxviii, 111, 341–2, 364; and children’s literature 250, 251, 261; and television 488–9; in the visual arts 326, 332, 333; and war 146
- Hostel* (Roth, 2005) 398
- House of the Long Shadows* (Walker, 1983) 390
- Hughes, John 85
- Hughes, James Fletcher 167
- human body 503; and death 275, 276–8, 279, 281; deformed/disabled xliii, 150, 377; and degeneration 396–7; and transformations 28, 59, 127, 360, 378, 394, 414, 436–7, 502–3
- human race, anxiety about future of xxv, xxviii, xlv; *see also* post-apocalyptic existence
- Hume, David *History of England* (1754–61) 10, 40
- Hunter, John 368, 369
- Hunter, Joseph 179
- Hurd, Richard *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) 6–8, 85, 203
- Hurston, Zora Neale *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) 128
- Hyde, Mr (character) 136, 343, 346, 348, 350, 378, 380, fig. 32.1

- I Am Legend* (Lawrence, 2007) 139, 395
 Illuminati panic (America, 1798–99) 30
 illusions 370; *see also* special effects
 illustrations: book 17, 19, 23, 24, 343–5, 346, *figs.* 2.1, 4.1; on book jackets 326, 328–9; satirical 175, 328, 333, *figs.* 15.1, 28.6; *see also* book illustrations
 imagination xl, 63, 172, 313, 332; and architecture 88; and children's literature 245; literature stimulating the 175, 176, 178, 205, 238, 239, 473–4; and the nation-state 52, 53, 59, 101; and poetry 214, 293; and the visual arts 330, 332; *see also* imaginative spaces; visuality
 imaginative spaces 145, 148, 292; *see also* cyberspace; internet, the
 “imperial Gothic” 135
 imperialism 10, 63, 66; *see also* colonialism
 imprisonment 300–1, 302, 305, 361; and rescue 107, 116, 149, 185, 188, 192, 194; in sensation fiction 265, 271; and videogames 461; and women 107, 116, 188, 194, 267–8, 271, 358; *see also* claustrophobia
 incarceration *see* imprisonment
 industrialization 127, 132, 366, 371
 infection *see* medical metaphors
Innocents, The (Clayton, 1961) 389
 installation art 412–13, 468–9, *figs.* 35.1, 35.2
 installments *see* serializations
 internet, the 143–4, 153, 469; fear of dangers of 143, 150, 152; and horror films 391; military origins of 147–8; *see also* computer games
Interview with the Vampire (Jordan, 1994) 394
Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The (Kaufman, 1956) 382
 invasion: and film 382; threat/fear of 53, 59, 65, 98, 135, 227, 470
 “investment mentality” 188
 Ircastensis *Love and Horror* (1812) 288–9
 Ireland: and antiquarianism 22, 40, 43; and colonial landscape 106–7; Gothic architecture of 21–2; and political conflict 44–5, 47; Rebellion of 1641 40; and the Reformation 40–1; and romance fiction 40–1; *see also* Irish literature
 Irish literature 38, 39, 40–1, 44, 47, 48; *see also under individual authors' names*
 Irving, Washington *Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819–20) 124
 Iser, Wolfgang “Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach, The” (2008) 341
 Ishiguro, Kazuo *Never Let Me Go* (2005) 504–6
 isolation, feelings of 65, 116, 132, 136, 302, 402, 406, 409, 493
 Italy: landscapes of 56, 62, 102, 104–5, 326; medieval architecture in 21
 Jack the Ripper 369–70
 Jackson, Rosemary 313
 Jackson, Shirley *Haunting of Hill House, The* (1959) 74, 389; film adaptation of 389
 Jacobin Gothic 206, 207
 Jamaica Inn's Ghost Hunt 480–1
 James I, King of England *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* 4
 James, George Payne Rainsford *Marie de Bourgogne* (1833) 221
 James, Henry 111–12
 “Miss Braddon” (1865) 265
Turn of the Screw, The (1898) 73; film adaptations of 389; rewrites of 466, 472–4
 James, Mia *By Midnight* (2010) 276, 281
 Japanese literature 399
 Jefferies, Richard *After London* (1885) 134
 Jefferson, Thomas xxxv–xxxvi
 Jeffrey, Francis 288
 Jekyll, Dr. (character) 349, 378, 384, 394, 436–7
 Jephson, Robert *Count of Narbonne, The* (1781) 354
 J-Horror 391, 402–3, 404
 John Murray (publisher) 162, 172
 Johnson, Samuel 39, 199, 200; *Dictionary* (1755–6) 39, 223–4
 Jones, Inigo 16
 Jones, James *Hardenbrass and Haverill* (1818) 291
 Jordanes *Getica* (c. 551) xxix–xxx
 Joyce, Graham *Tooth Fairy, The* (1996) 74
Ju-On films (Shimizu 2002) 403, 404
 Jutes xxix–xxx

- Kahlert, Karl Friedrich: *Necromancer, The* (1792) 231; 1794 English translation 236; reviews of 234
- Kate, Lauren *Betrayal of Natalie Hargrove, The* (2009) 275
- Keats, John:
Isabella, Or the Pot of Basil (1820); radio play adaptation of 358
 “La Belle Dame sans Merci” (1819) 215–16
- K-horror 404
- King, Charlotte *see* Dacre, Charlotte
- King, Stephen:
Duma Key (2008) 305
Lisey’s Story (2004) 75, 305
Misery (1987) 298, 299–302
Shining, The (1977) xxxix, 75; film adaptations of 390
- Kipling, Rudyard “gossip tales” 65; “Mark of the Beast, The” (1890) 67–8
- Krueger, Freddy (character) 476
- labyrinths 362
- Lacan, Jacques 73
- Lackington, James 160
- Lady’s Magazine, The* 266
- Lamb, Charles 255, 284; *Adventures of Ulysses, The* 249–50
- landscape 102–4: British 99–100, 104–5; colonial 106–8; European 103, 104; idealized 104–5; industrial 493; Irish 106; Italian 56, 62, 102, 104–5, 326; and feelings of isolation 65, 136, 302, 402, 406, 409; and national identity 98–9, 104–5, 106–7; American 28, 33, 64–5, 123, 124–5, 147; postmodern 402, 409; Romantic 43–4, 46; and sense of the uncanny 65, 101, 102, 105, 106, 133, 143–4, 390, 402; urban 113–14, 132–4, 136, 138, 302, 369, 402, 406, 408, 409; sublime 73, 103, 493; *see also* environments; natural world; picturesque, the; wilderness
- landscape painting 326
- Lane, William 160, 162, 165, 166–7
- Lang, Andrew 371
- Lathom, Francis 165; *Midnight Bell, The* (1798) 231–2
- Laura; Or, Original Letters. A sequel to the Eloisa of J. J. Rousseau. From the French* (Anon., 1790) 226–7
- Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan:
 “Carmilla” (1872) xliii, 111, 346; film adaptations of 393
 “Schalken the Painter”, television adaptation of 489
- Ledwich, Edward 21, 22, 40, 47
- Lee, Sophia *Recess, The* (1783–5) 43, 207
- Lego Star Wars* (1999) 456
- Leland, Thomas 40; *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762) 41–3, fig. 4.1
- Lemony Snicket *Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999–2007) 258, 260
- Lennox, Charlotte *Female Quixote, The* (1752) 200, 292
- Leroux, Gaston: *Phantom of the Opera, The* (1911) 342–3; stage adaptations of 355
- Lévy, Maurice *Le roman gothique anglais* (1968) 222–3
- Lewis, Leopold *Bells, The* (1871) 357
- Lewis, Matthew Gregory 63
Captive, The (1803) 354
Castle Spectre, The (1797) 193; stage adaptations of 354, 357, 359, 360, 362
Monk, The (1796) 55–6, 62, 73, 165–6, 177, 188, 473; “Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogine” 214–15, 288; “Bleeding Nun, The” 186; censored 4th edition (1798) 166; chapbook adaptations of 186, 269, fig. 16.1; European literary influences on 226–7; French translations of 222; “Giles Jollup the Grave, and Brown Sally Green” (1798) 288; parodies of 286–7, 293–4; play adaptations of 193, 194; published reviews of 177, 178; readers’ responses to 177, 178–9, 180
 parodies of works by 285–8, 293–4, 328, fig. 15.1
 stage adaptations by: *Raymond and Agnes* (1809) 194; *Rugatino: Or, The Bravo of Venice* (1804) 234
Tales of Wonder (1801) 175, 191–2, 285, 287–8, 328, fig. 15.1
Timour the Tartar; A Grand Romantic Melo-Drama in Two Acts (1811) 290
- Lewton, Val 382–3
- liberty, Gothic tradition of 8, 10
- libraries *see* circulating libraries
- lifestyle *see* goth lifestyle
- lifestyle television 446–9; *see also* makeover television shows

- lighting (theatrical performances) 360; *see also* special effects
Lights Out (Cooper, 1934–5) 488
 literacy 173, 182
 Locke, John *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) 244, 250
 Lockhart, John 95, 96
 Lodger, *The* (Hitchcock, 1927) 384
 Lombroso, Cesare 350, 369
 London, England 63, 65, 66; Gothic tourism in 477, 478; Victorian 113, 136, 267
 Longmans 163
 Lorre, Peter 382
Lost Will of Dr Rant, The (1951) 488
 Louis XIV, King of France 145
 Louthembourg, Philippe Jacques de 92–3; *Philosopher in a Moonlit Churchyard, A* (1790) 323, 326–8, *fig.* 28.2
 Lovecraft, H.P. “Shadow Out of Time, The” (1936) 65
 “Loyalist Gothic romance” 203, 204
 Lucas, Charles *Infernal Quixote, The* (1801) 291, 293
 Lugosi, Bela 348, 349, 380
 lunar light/illumination 327
 Lyttelton, Charles 19
 Lyttelton Mr *German Sorceress, The* (1802) 166

 Macpherson, James xxxiv, xxxv; *Original Papers . . .* (1775) xxxiv; (1765) xxxiv, 43, 204; satirization of 102
Magazine of Curiosity and Wonder, The (1835) 343
 magic lantern shows xl; *Works of Ossian, The* 325, 327, 328, 362, 367, 370
 makeover television shows 450–2
 male authors 167, 169, *fig.* 14.2; *see also under individual authors’ names*
 male readers 178–9
 Mallet, Paul Henri *Northern Antiquities* (1770) xxxii–xxxiii
Man from Planet X, The (Ulmer, 1951) 383
Manhunt (2003) 456
 Mansfield, Richard 347–8, 349
Marat/Sade (Weiss, 1964) 355, 361
 maritime environments 126
 Marks, John *Fangland* (2007) 466, 470–2
 Marr, Melissa *Ink Exchange* (2008) 276
 Marsh, George Perkins *Goths in New England, The* (1843) xxxv
 Marsh, John 178, 179
 Marsh, Richard *Beetle, The* (1897) xliii, 66
 Marsollier des Vivetières, B. J. *Camille, ou le Souterrain* (1791) 192
 Marten, Maria 357
Martha Marcy May Marlene (Durkin, 2011) 74
Martyrs (Laugier, 2008) 74
 Marx, K. and Engels, F. *Communist Manifesto, The* (1848) 315–16, 372
Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (Branagh, 1994) 392
Masters of Horror (Garris, 2005–7) 487
Masters of Horror (Murphy and Falchuk 2011–) 488
 Mather, Cotton *Wonders of the Invisible World, The* (1693) 28
 Mathias, T. J.: *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–7) 177, 224, 225, 293; “Shade of Alexander Pope, The” (1799) 234–5
Matrix, The (Wachowskis, 1999) 151
 Maturin, Charles R. 106; *Albigenses, The* (1824) 106; *Bertram* (1816) 235; *Fatal Revenge* (1806) 46; *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) 41, 47–8, 107, 164; *Milesian Chief, The* (1812) 47, 106
 McCarthy, Cormac: *Blood Meridian* (1985) 124, 129; *Road, The* (2006) xxvi–xxviii, xxxvi, 129
 McCracken, Henry Joy 45
 McCullers, Carson 419
 McGrath, Patrick: *Ghost Town* (2005) 77–9, 140; *Trauma* (2008) 72, 77
 McMann, Lisa *Missing, The* (2011) 275
 medical metaphors xxv, xxvi–xxvii, xxviii, 34, 114, 395, 467–8, 469, 470, 471, 501, 506
 medieval architecture 8, 85, 327, 417, 419
 medieval period and culture 18, 417, 455; *see also* medieval architecture
 Medwin, Thomas 180
 Mellor, Nathaniel *Giantbun* (2009) 412–13, *fig.* 35.2
 melodrama 264, 289, 290; staging of 289–90, 357
 Melville, Herman 129; *Benito Cereno* (1855) 126; “Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles, The” (1854) 126–7; *Moby-Dick* (1851) 126

- Memories* (Kim Jee-woon, 2002) 401, 402–3, 404, fig. 34.1
- Merlin Entertainments Group 481
- Merrick, Joseph 368–9
- mesmerism 366, 372, 374
- Metropolis* (Lang, 1927) 138, 380, 385
- Meyer, F. *Die Burg von Otranto: eine gothische Geschichte* (1794) 232, 233
- Meyer, Stephenie:
Breaking Dawn (2008) 274, 276, 278
New Moon (2006) 274, 276
Official Illustrated Guide (2011) 280
Twilight (2005) 274, 281
Twilight series 274; film adaptations of 274, 276–7, 279–80, 282, 318, 388
- Middle Ages *see* medieval period and culture
- middle classes: and children's books 246; reading habits of 174, 188
- Miéville, China: *King Rat* (1998) 429, 430–1, 434, 436, 437–8; *Perdido Street Station* (2000) 138–9
- Miles, Robert 52, 313
- military architecture *see* fortifications
- millennium, the 498–9
- Milton, John 18, 93, 173, 174, 211, 329
- Minerva Library, Leadenhall St., London 160, 167
- Minerva Press 162, 165, 166–7
- Mitford, Bertram: *Sign of the Spider, The* (1896) 67; *Weird of Deadly Hollow, The* (1891) 67
- mobile technology 144, 152–3, 400
- modernity 12, 101, 105, 110, 132, 136; *see also* industrialization; urbanization
- Moers, Ellen 315; concept of 'female Gothic' 314, 419
- monastic architecture 17, 21–23, 86, 88, 417
- monsters 367–8, 501, 508; association with criminality 369–70; in horror films 376, 391–2; as an 'invisible' danger 369–70, 385; conceptualization as 'Others' 369–70; *see also* deformed/disabled bodies
- Montagu, Elizabeth *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear, An* (1769) 203
- Moore, Alan and Campbell, Eddie *From Hell* (1991–96) 337
- Moore, George: *Grasville Abbey: A Romance* (1793–7) 266; *Monks and the Robbers, The* (1794; 1798–1805) 266
- Moore, Margaret King *Stories of Old Daniel* (1808) 250–1
- Moore, Thomas *Corruption and Intolerance* (1808) 38–9
- moral impropriety: and Gothic fiction 172, 173–6, 177, 178, 199–200, 205, 239; and romantic fiction 173–6, 199–200, 205, 206
- More, Hannah 315; *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808) 167; *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) xxxvi–xxxvii, 173; views on the novel 166
- Morgan, Jack *Biology of Terror* (2002) 417
- Morgan, Lady *see* Owenson, Sydney
- Morrison, Toni: *Beloved* (1988) 70, 129; *Playing in the Dark* (1992) 129
- Most Haunted* (2002–10) 480
- "Mrs Meeke": *Abbey of Clugny* (1795) 165; *Count St Blancard, Or, The Prejudiced Judge* (1795) 165; *Langhton Priory* (1809) 165; *Mysterious Wife, The* (1796) 165; *What Shall Be, Shall Be* (1823) 165
- Mrs Showes *Restless Matron, The* (1799) 166
- Mudrooroo *Undying, The* (1998) 70
- Munsters, The* (Burns and Hayward, 1964–66) 488
- Murasaki Shikibu *Tale of the Genji/Genji Monogatari* 399
- Musgrave, Agnes *Edmund of the Forest* (1797) 166
- music 429, 431–2, 435–7; listeners' responses to 433, 434, 439; and ritual 437; and stage adaptations 357; and television 488; *see also* musicals; opera; soundtracks
- musical instruments 433, 435, 437
- musicals 355, 357; *see also under individual titles*
- Mystery and Imagination* (1966–70) 488
- Nanny, The* (Holt, 1965) 395
- Naples, Italy 101, 102, 104, 105
- narrative subject painting 328, 329, 330–1; *see also* fantasy paintings
- national identity 51, 52–3, 63; English 21, 56, 98–9, 202–3, 204; Irish 106–7;

- southeast Asian 402, 409; *see also* nationalism
- nationalism 51, 52, 477; British 52–3, 54, 57, 63; English 16, 20, 21; Irish 22; Welsh 22; *see also* nation-state, the; national identity
- nationhood, British 52–3, 54, 59
- nation-state, the 51–2, 55, 59, 60, 100–1; *see also* national identity
- Native Americans 28, 123, 137; *see also* American Gothic literary tradition
- natural world 121–2, 124–5, 130; *see also* environments; wilderness
- nature writing 124
- Naubert, Benedikte *Herrmann von Unna* (1788) 233, 237
- Neal, John 124
- Necrobus, London 482, 483, 484
- neoclassical aesthetics 86, 445
- Nevill, Adam *Apartment 16* (2010) xliv
- New Light evangelicals 28–9
- New Moon* (Weitz, 2009) 276
- New Orleans 137
- “New Weird” writing 138
- Newbery, John 243, 244
- Newman, A.K. 167
- Nietzsche, Friedrich 437
- Night of the Eagle* (Hayers, 1962) 394
- Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968) 395
- Nightbreed* (Barker, 1990) 397
- Nightmare on Elm Street, A* (Craven, 1984) 396
- 9/11 75, 76–7, 79–80, 139–40, 472
- Noble brothers 160, 162
- Nordau, Max *Degeneration* (1892) 132–3
- North America 27, 28, 29; Gothic fiction 35, 70, 130; landscapes 123; *see also* America; Canadian wilderness
- North American Indians *see* Native Americans
- Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922) 376, 380–1
- nostalgia 23, 258, 262
- novel, the 160, 166, 167–8; “domestication” of 168, 182; and education 167; popularity of 167; publishing costs of 162–3; *see also* Gothic novel, the; Gothic romance novels; realist novels
- “novelists of purpose” 31
- Nun, The: Or, Memoirs of Angelique; An Interesting Tale* (Anon., 1683) 188–90, fig. 16.2
- O’Halloran, Sylvester 40
- Oedipal theory (Freud) 74, 145, 400
- offstage (theatre) 362–3
- Old Light Calvinists 28–9; *see also* Puritanism
- Omen, The* (Donner, Richard, 1976) 75
- One Missed Call/Chakushin ari* (Miike, 2003) 152–3, 400–1
- One Missed Call 2/Chakushin ari 2* (Tsukamoto, 2005) 400
- One Missed Call Final/Chakushin ari final* (Asô, 2006) 400–1
- opera 192, 356–7
- optical technology 351–2, 367; *see also* photography
- orientalism 56–7, 58; *see also* Otherness
- Orphan Heiress of Sir Gregory, The* (Anon., 1799) 246–7
- Orwell, George *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) 145
- Ostrogoths xxx
- Otherness 53, 54, 55–6, 57–60, 66, 98–9; and ‘monsters’ 369–70, 385, 500; *see also* deformed/disabled bodies
- Others, The* (Amenábar, 2001) 74, 391
- Owenson, Sydney 167; *Florence McCarthy* (1818) 39, 41; *Wild Irish Girl, The* (1806) 46
- painting 323, 331; American 324–5; fantasy 331; landscape 326; narrative subject 328, 329, 330–1; *see also* contemporary art; Fuseli, Henry; illustrations; visual culture
- Palahniuk, Chuck: *Haunted* (2005) 298, 302–5
- paper costs 162
- Paranormal Activity* (Peli, 2007) 391
- paranormal romance 274, 275, 277, 281, 282
- parody 169, 174, 176–7, 231–2, 285–8, 291–2; and television 488, 490, 491, 495; *see also* burlesque; satire
- Parsons, Eliza 163, 165
- Castle of Wolfenbach, The* (1793) 232, 268

- Mysterious Warning, The* (1796) 232;
chapbook adaptations of 269
- Patrick, F.C. *More Ghosts!* (1798) 294
- Peake, Richard B. *Presumption: Or, the Fate of Frankenstein* (1823) 193, 195, 359
- Peeping Tom* (Powell, 1960) 376, 385, 395–6
- Pennsylvania, Eastern State Penitentiary 477–8
- Penny Dreadfuls 260–1; child readers of 255–6; use of illustrations in 343–6; serialization of 266
- Pepper, John 370
- Pepper's Ghost 370, 373
- Percy, Bishop Thomas 8; “Appendix II: On the Ancient Metrical Romances” 191; *Northern Antiquities* (English translation, 1770) xxxii; *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) 203
- Perry, Francis *Series of English Medals* (1762) 19
- Persia xxxiv
- Pétis de la Croix, François *Turkish Tales* (1707–8) 226
- phantasmagoria 325, 362, 367
- Phantom of the Opera* (Webber and Hart, 1986) 355, 357
- Phantom of the Opera, The* (Julian, 1925) 381–2
- Philadelphia, America 28, 30; yellow fever in 29, 33
- Phiz 343
- photography 79–80, 350–1, 352, 367; and criminal anthropology 350–1, 369; and films 407–8, 409; *see also* special effects
- phrenology 372
- Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Weir, 1976) 65
- picturesque, the 46, 98, 103, 457;
architecture 23, 41, 43–4; *see also* ruins
- Pinkerton, John *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths, A* (1787) xxxiii–xxxiv, xxxv, 10; *Enquiry into the History of Scotland, Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III* (1789) xxxiv–xxxv
- Piranesi, Giovanni Battista 332–3;
Invenzione capric di Carceri (1740s/1761) 323, 332, 333, *fig.* 28.5
- Pitt (the Younger), William 55, 57, 58
- Planché, James Robinson *Vampire, The: Or, The Bride of the Isles* (1820) 193, 194–5, 362
- plantations 63, 127–8, 137
- Plath, Sylvia 219
- Plato *Phaidros* 238
- plays *see* stage adaptations
- Poe, Edgar Allen 32, 129, 216–17; *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1908) 346, *fig.* 29.3
- poetry 86, 210–11, 215, 220; and comedy 214, 216; and death 211–12, 215, 217–19; Romantic 210; and tragedy 214, 216; *see also* ballads; *and under individual authors' names*
- Polidori, John William *Vampyre, The* (1819) 194, 266
- Poltergeist* (Hooper, 1982) 391
- Pope, Alexander 85
- Portal* (Valve, 2007) 454–5
- Porter, Jane *Scottish Chiefs, The* (1810) 46
- post-apocalyptic existence xxv, xxvii, xxviii, xlv, 139, 420
- post-colonial literature 69–70, 137
- posthumanism 504
- postmodern landscapes 402, 409; *see also* urban environments
- postmodernism 297, 298, 406, 420, 462, 465; and Gothic fiction 456, 498; and television 491, 492; in videogames 456; *see also* postmodern landscapes
- Powis Castle* (Anon., 1788) 291
- Praed, Rosa “Bunyip, The” (1891) 65, 68–9
- praxinoscope theatre 352, *fig.* 29.5
- Prevost, Rev. F. *Flowers of Literature* (1801–2) 173
- Price, Francis *Series of Particular and Useful Observations . . . A* (1753) 19
- Priestly, Chris 255; *Dead of Winter, The* (2011) 258; *Mister Creecher* (2011) 258; *Tales of Terror* series (2007–9) 258, 260
- Prince of Persia* (1989–) 457
- printing 162–3
- Protestantism 20, 22, 40–1, 226, 227, 310;
and literature 62, 185; and ideologies of self-improvement 185, 188, 189–90; *see also* Puritanism
- Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) 74, 376, 383, 384–5, 395, *fig.* 32.2

- psychoanalytic theory (Freud) 313–14, 375, 438
- psycho-terror 115–16
- public entertainment 367; *see also* spectacle; theatrical performances
- publishers: relationships with authors 160–2, 163; *see also under individual names*
- publishing industry 160–2, 167; *see also* bookselling
- Pugin, A.W.N. 419, 446; *Contrasts* (1836) 23
- Pullman, Philip *Sally Lockhart* books (1985–94) 257–8
- Punch* magazine 346
- Punter, David *Literature of Terror, The* (1980) 312, 314
- puppetry 405, 406
- Puritanism 16, 27, 29, 123, 125, 244; *see also* Protestantism
- Quarterly Review* 172, 174
- Quincey, Thomas De *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) 332
- “R. S.” *New Monk, The* (1798) 166, 286–7, 294
- racism 58
- Radcliffe, Ann 44, 62, 159, 165, 178
- chapbook adaptations of novels of 186
- French critiques of novels of 223
- influence on Walter Scott 207–8
- influence of French literature on 225
- and geographical imagery 102–4, 105, 479
- published works:
- Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, The* (1789) 43, 146, 165, 204
- Gaston de Blondville* (1826) 204
- Italian, The* (1797) 55, 56, 104–5; French translations of 222; readers’ responses to 179, 180; sale of copyright 163
- Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, A* (1795) 479
- Mysteries of Udolpho, The* (1794) 52, 73, 103–4, 146–7, 165, 206, 207, 268; French translations of 222, 228; jacket illustration of 326; readers’ responses to 179–80, 246; representations of reading in 297, 298; sale of copyright 163
- “On the Supernatural in Poetry” (1826) 205
- Romance of the Forest, The* (1791) 146, 165; French translations of 222; play adaptation of 193; representations of reading in 297, 298, 299
- Sicilian Romance, A* (1790) 146, 204; French translations of 222
- representations of reading and writing in her novels 297, 298–9
- radio plays 362–3
- Railo, Eino *Haunted Castle, The* (1927) 310
- Ramayana* 406
- Rapin, Paul de *L’histoire d’Angleterre* (1724) 10
- Rawlinson, Richard 17
- Raymond and Agnes, Or The Castle of Lindenberg* (Covent Garden, 1797) 194
- reading 297; *see also* literacy
- reading habits: working classes 173, 185–6, 187–8; middle/upper classes 174, 188; *see also* female readers
- Real, the 73, 78, 79–80
- realism 46, 76, 113, 182, 259, 267, 352, 505
- realist novel, the 38, 182, 200, 259
- Rebecca* (Hitchcock, 1940) 383–4
- Red Riding Hood* (Hardwicke, 2011) 281
- Red Spectre, The* (Chomon, 1907) 377
- Reeve, Clara 200–1; *Champion of Virtue, The* (1777) 52; *Exiles, The: Or, Memoirs of the Count de Cronstadt* (1778) 224; *Old English Baron, The* (1778) 185, 201, 204; *Progress of Romance, The* (1785) 201–2
- Reformation, the 16, 22, 40–1
- Regionalist literature 127
- religion 28, 211, 341; and conflict 22, 40, 47, 48; and architecture 16–19, 56; *see also* anti-Catholic sentiment; Catholicism; Protestantism; religious writers
- religious writers 167
- remaindered books 160
- Renaissance, the xxxi, 15, 21, 368, 413, 415
- Repton, Humphry 99
- “rescue operas” 192
- resurrection 277–8, 279
- revenge 188, 329, 361, 370, 392, 399, 406, 473

- Revenge of Frankenstein, The* (Fisher, 1958) 392
- revolutions 29, 30, 173; *see also under individual entries*
- rewriting/recycling text 70, 116, 256, 465, 474; *see also* chapbooks; *and under individual authors' names*
- Rhodes, Cecil 63–4
- Rice, Anne *Interview With a Vampire* (1976) 137, 354
- Richardson, John *Wacousta* (1832) 64
- Richardson, Samuel *Pamela, or virtue rewarded* (1740) 30
- Ring, The* (Verinski, 2002) 391
- Ringu* (Nakata, 1998) 391
- Robertson's Phantasmagoria 480
- Robison, John *Proofs of a conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe . . .* (1797) 30
- Roche, Regina Maria 165; *Children of the Abbey, The* (1796) 43–4, 165; *Clermont* (1798) 44, 208; *Munster Cottage Boy, The* (1820) 44
- Rocky Horror Picture Show, The* (Sarman, 1975) 357, 358, 392
- Rocky Horror Show, The* (O'Brien, 1973) 357–8, 362
- role-playing games 139
- “roman noir” 223
- romance xxxvii, xxxix, 6–7, 30, 47, 124, 201–2, 207, 317; definitions of 39, 199, 310; medieval xlii, 8, 41, 88, 203, 329, 417; as a term of criticism 40; representations in the visual arts 329, *fig.* 28.3; *see also* Gothic romance novels; paranormal romance; romantic fiction; Romanticism
- Romania, Dracula tourism in 477, 478, 483
- romantic fiction 38–40, 44, 46–7, 66, 164, 174, 199, 200, 310; and children's books 249; and female readers 164, 292, *fig.* 15.1; and female writers 164, 199, *fig.* 14.2; and German literature 31, 232, 310; Irish 38, 47; perceived moral dangers of 173–6, 199–200, 205, 206; popularity of 160, 200; and readers' naivety 174–5, 176, 200, 205; satires of 199, 292, 329, *fig.* 15.1; young adult 274–5, 282; *see also* Gothic romance novels; poetry; *and under individual authors' names*
- Romantic landscape 43–4, 46; *see also* picturesque, the; sublime, the
- Romanticism 20, 215, 216, 219–20, 249, 444
- ROME “Der Wolfsmantel” (2007) 431–2
- Rosa, Salvator *Landscape with Tobias and the Angel* 103, *fig.* 9.1
- Rousseau, J. J. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) 227
- Rowlandson, Mary *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* (1682) 28
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter* (1997) 259
- Royal Academy, London 326, 329, 332
- Ruilova, Aida 412
- ruins xlii, 18, 22, 23, 39, 41, 44, 54, 106, 107, 207, 327
- Ruskin, John *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) 110
- Russell, Karen *Swamplandia!* (2011) 130
- Rymer, James Malcolm:
Varney the Vampire (1845–7) 266; stage adaptation of 347
- Sade, Marquis de *Les Infortunes de la vertu* (1791) 226
- satire 175, 199, 285, 292, 329, *fig.* 15.1, *fig.* 28.6; *see also* illustrations; parody
- Saw* (2004–2010) 397–8
- Saxe, Maurice de *Mes Rêveries* (1775) 145
- Saxons xxix–xxx, 5, 202–3
- Sayers, Frank *Dramatic Sketches of the Ancient Northern Mythology* (1790) 191
- Scandinavia xxix–xxx
- Scare Attractions 481–2
- Schauerroman* 233–4, 238
- Schiller, Friedrich von: *Geisterseher, Der* (*The Ghost-Seer*) (1787–89) 31; French translation of 231; *Räuber, Die* (1781) 192
- Schmitt, Cannon 56
- science fiction 138, 152, 382–3, 397, 455, 504, 505
- sciences: and education 368; professionalization of 367, 370, 372; psychological 370; *see also* criminal anthropology
- Scotland: ancient history of xxxiv–xxxv, 204; Gothic architecture in 22–3; Gothic tourism in 476–7, 478; Jacobite rebellions (1715, 1745) 40, 204;

- publishing industry in 161; and the Reformation 40–1; and romance fiction 40–1
- Scott, Sir Walter xxxv, 23, 38, 45, 46, 169
influence of Ann Radcliffe 207–8
published works: *Bride of Lammermoor, The* (1819) 169; “*Fire King, The*” 329; *Ivanhoe* (1820) 11, 223; *Monastery, The* (1820) 45; *Tales of My Landlord* (1816) 45; “*Wandering Willie’s Tale*” (1824) 46; *Waverley: Or, ’Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814) 168, 177, 208; “*William and Helen*” (1796) 191
- Scottish literature 38, 48; *see also under individual authors’ names*
- Scream* (Craven, 1996) 396
- Scythians xxxii, xxxiii–xxxiv
- Seven* (Fincher, 1995) xlii, 397
- sea *see* maritime environments
- séances 373–4
- secret societies 237–8
- Seeley, John *Expansion of England, The* (1882) 63
- Self, Will *Dorian: An Imitation* (2002) 465, 466–9
- self-expression, freedom of 445, 446, 448, 449, 452
- Selznick, David O. 383
- Sendak, Maurice *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) 261
- sensation fiction 111–12, 113–14, 115, 264–5, 266; criticisms of 266; illustrations 343–4; and penny publications 343–4; serializations of 265–7, 268, 269; *see also* romantic fiction
- sentimental novel, the 30–1, 164
- serial killers 388, 395–6, 492, 493
- serializations 169, 255; and sensation fiction 265–7, 268, 269
- Seward, Anna 178, 285
- sex 58, 144, 213, 299; and film/television 277, 279, 378, 383, 389, 393–4, 495, 500–1; and homosexuality 465–6; and the visual arts 329–30; *see also* cyberporn; eroticism; sexuality
- sexual orientation 73, 74, 90–1, 93–4, 112, 392; *see also* homosexuality
- sexual violence 92, 415, 468; and film/television 389, 495; and stage plays 361; and the visual arts 329–30, 335; against women 35, 300, 495
- sexuality 60, 92–3, 144, 149, 243, 313, 357, 490; and deviance 112, 149, 151, 264, 299; female 308–9, 406; in film 383, 389, 392, 394, 406; and vampires 135, 346, 494, 495; *see also* eroticism
- Shadow of a Doubt* (Hitchcock, 1943) 384
- Shadow of the Colossus* (2006) 457
- Shakespeare, William, works of xxix, 85, 86, 173, 174, 203, 329; *Hamlet* 370; influence on Gothic romance 203–4, 205
- Shaun of the Dead* (Wright, 2004) 395
- Shelley, Mary 303
Frankenstein (1818) xliii, 168, 181, 308, 316, 329, 390, 417, 505; film adaptations of 195, 377–8, 382, 391–2; illustrations in 346; stage adaptations of 193, 195, 348, 349, 359, 360, *fig.* 29.4; rewrites of 474
reading habits of 181
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe 180–1; “*Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*” (1816) 210; reading habits of 180, 181; *Revolt of Islam, The* (1818) 145
- Sherwood, Mary Martha *Fairchild Family, The* (1818) 250
- shilling shockers 343; *see also* Penny Dreadfuls
- Shining, The* (Kubrick, 1980) 390
- Siddons, Henry *Sicilian Romance, Or The Apparition of the Cliff* (1794) 193–4, 356
- silence 363–4, 404
- Silence of the Lambs, The* (Demme, 1991) 396
- Silent Hill* franchise 460–3
- Siouxsie and the Banshees “*Premature Burial*” (*Join Hands*, 1979) 431
- Sixth Sense, The* (Shyamalan, 1999) 391
- slasher movies 383, 395–6
- slavery 10, 127, 129, 137; *see also* plantations
- Sleath, Eleanor *Glenowen, Or The Fairy Palace* (1815) 250
- Smith, Horace “*Fire and Ale. By M.G.L. from Rejected Addresses, Or The New Theatrum Poetrum*” (1812) 287–8
- Smollett, Tobias *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) 146
- Snog, Marry, Avoid* (2008–) 451–2

- Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012) 281
- Social Network, The* (Fincher, 2010) 153
- social networking 153
- Society for Psychical Research 374
- Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings 24
- Soil & Eclipse “Violin” (from *The Mirror* 2008) 435
- sonic spectrality 429–31
- sounds 429–30; *see also* music
- soundtracks 429, 433
- South Africa: and colonialism 63–4, 66–7; and Gothic literature 66–7; post-Apartheid 137
- South Korea: economic growth 400, 402; film 400, 402, 404
- southeast Asian Gothic tradition; and film 400–1, 404, 406; and literature 399–400; *see also under individual entries*
- Southern Gothic literary tradition 127–9
- Southey, Robert 177–8, 191; “Old Woman of Berkeley, The” (1799) 284; “Surgeon’s Warning, The” from *Poems* (1799) 284
- special effects; “offstage” mechanics of 362; in films 377, 396–7; on stage 290, 357, 361, 370; and trick photography 377
- spectacle xl, 325, 328, 366, 367, 370; and architecture 92, 145, 147; and film/television xliii, xliv, 378, 383, 487, 491, 494–5, 501; and the theatre 290, 347, 373; and videogames 457; and the visual arts 93, 328, 331; *see also* art exhibitions; special effects; theatrical performances
- spectres *see* ghosts
- Spencer, Herbert 369
- Spenser, *Faery Queen* (1715) 85
- spirits 372–4
- spiritualism 366, 373–4
- St Paul’s Cathedral, London 16, 18–19
- St Stephen’s Chapel, London 18
- stadial historiography 6, 10
- stage adaptations 348–9, 354–7; and use of silence 363–4; *see also* offstage (theatre); theatrical performances
- Statute of Anne (1709) 161
- Stavely, Thomas 17
- Steele, R. and Addison, J. *Santon Barsisa* (*The Guardian*, 1714) 225, 226
- Stephenson, Neal *Cryptonomicon* (1999) 150
- Sterne, Laurence *Tristram Shandy* 145
- Stevenson, Robert Louis
- Ebb Tide, The* (1894) 65
- Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, The* (1886) xliii, 111, 135–6; film adaptations of 378, 383, 436; stage adaptations of 347–8
- “Thrawn Janet” (1887) 46
- see also under individual entries*
- Stoker, Bram *Dracula* (1897) xxxix, xliii, 63, 73, 111, 116, 135, 316, 317–18; film adaptations of 317, 348, 380, 381, 382; play/stage adaptations of 193, 348, 349; radio plays based on 308–9; rewrites of 466, 470–2; television adaptations of 491; tourism based on 477; *see also under individual entries*
- Stone Tape, The* (Sasdy, 1972) 391
- “Storm and Stress Movement” 233
- Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, The* (Brenon, 1913) 378
- Strawberry Hill, London 10, 15, 53, 88, 89–90, 92, 95–6, 418, 445–6, 479, *fig.* 8.1
- street theatre 476
- Stross, Charles *Atrocity Archives, The* (2004) 152
- Strutt, Joseph 18
- subcultures *see* goth subculture
- subject painting *see* narrative subject painting
- sublime, the 18, 73, 103, 172, 208, 312, 493; and landscape painting 326; and videogaming 457; *see also* ruins
- suburban Gothic 136–7, 462
- suburbia 133, 136
- suicide 275
- Summers, Montague *Gothic Quest, The* (1938) 311
- supernatural, the 38, 44, 45, 367, 372; in children’s literature 245, 247, 249, 250; and Chinese literature 215, 399; and film/television 139, 388, 389, 391, 396, 401, 487, 488, 493; and Gothic fiction 3, 11, 47, 65, 67–9, 116, 169, 195, 201, 205, 233, 317, 438, 472; evident in play adaptations 195; in videogames 459, 461, 462; and the visual arts 329, 330, 416, *fig.* 28.4; and young adult literature 274–5, 282; *see also* paranormal romance

- superstitions 67–8
 survival horror videogames 458–60, 461
 swarming (as metaphor) xxvi–xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxx, xxxvi, xxxvii, xlv–xlv, 173
 Swinburne, A. C. “After Death” 218–19
- Tacitus, Cornelius xxiv, xxix, 5; *Treatise on the Situation, Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany*, A xxxiii
- Tales of Terror* (Anon., 1801) 285–6, 288, fig. 25.2
- taste 443–6, 450; *see also* bad taste; fashion; self-expression, freedom of
- Taylor, Edgar *German Popular Stories* (1823) 249
- Taylor, Jeffery *Young Islanders, A Tale of the Last Century* (1841) 251
- Taylor, William *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828–30) 236
- technology 362, 391, 400–1, 407–8, 468, 471, 487, 498; *see also* digital technology; internet, the; mobile technology; optical technology; photography
- Tegg, Thomas 186, fig. 16.1
- telepathy 374
- television programmes 487, 488, 490, 496; crime 492; ghost-hunting 480; interior decorating/design 446–9; makeover 450–2; and serial killers 492, 493; *see also* technology; and *under individual programme titles*
- Temple Church, London 19
- Temple, Sir William *Introduction to the History of England, An* (1695) xxx–xxxi
- Tencin, Madame de *Mémoires du Comte de Comminge* (1735) 225
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal” (from *In Memoriam*, 1833–50) 217–18
- Terrific Register, The* (1825) 343, fig. 29.1
- terror 41, 47, 55, 62, 79, 172, 205, 221, 269, 285, 299, 312, 424; and children’s literature 255, 258, 261; and cities 133, 134, 139, 267; and domestic environment 110–12, 488; and the Gothic romance novel 205, 312; and use of silence 364; in visual terms 39, 326, 416–17, 420, 424; *see also* psycho-terror; sublime, the; terrorism
- Terror of Frankenstein* (Floyd, 1977) 392
- terrorism 80, 139, 144, 151, 470; *see also* 9/11
- Teuthold, Peter 236
- Texas Chainsaw Massacre, The* (Hooper, 1974) 396
- textual cannibalism 278–81
- Thai cinema 402, 404
- theatrical performances 347–8, 349, 354, 357, fig. 29.4; and audience participation 358, 483; and Gothic tourism 481, 482–3, 484; and use of lighting 360; southeast Asian 406; and use of special effects 290, 357, 361, 362; *see also* music; musicals; offstage (theatre); séances; street theatre
- Thelwall, John 55; *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace* (1793) 206
- 13 *Ghosts* (Castle, 1960) 390
- Thomson, Christopher 178, 179
- Thomson, James *Liberty, A Poem* (1734) xxxi–xxxii, xxxv, 10
- Thoreau, Henry David *Walden* (1854) 122
- Three* (2002) 401–2
- Three . . . Extremes* (2004) 401, 407, 409
- Todd, Ruthven *Tracks in the Snow* (1946) 324
- Tompkins, J. M. S. *Popular Novel in England 1770–1800, The* (1932) 310
- Tooke, John Horne 55
- tourism *see* Gothic tourism
- Tractarian Society 18
- Transcendentalists 124, 125
- transformations (of the body) 28, 59, 127, 360, 414, 503, 504; Jekyll/Hyde 378, 436–7; and music 436–7; vampires 377; werewolf 378, 394
- translation 221–2, 224, 227–8, 239; accuracy of 231; unofficial 231, 233; *see also under individual languages*
- trauma 72, 73, 76–7, 472; and childhood 74–5; and war 74, 75; and writing 300–2, 306; *see also* abuse
- travel 57, 67; and antiquarianism 21, 23; and fear of ‘going native’ 64, 65
- trees *see* forests
- Treves, Frederick 368–9
- trick photography *see* special effects
- Trimmer, Sarah *Guardian of Education, The* (1802–6) 245
- “triple-decker” 160, 169

- True Blood* (Ball, 2008–) 393, 487, 488, 494–5
 Turner, J. M. W. 325
 28 *Days Later* (Boyle, 2002) 139, 395, 506
 28 *Weeks Later* (Fresnadillo, 2007) 506
Twilight franchise 274, 280–1, 282, 318
Twin Peaks (Lynch 1990–91) 490, 492–4
 Tylor, Edward 67
- Ulmer, Edgar G. 382–3
 uncanny, sense of the 46, 107, 133, 233, 257, 314, 405, 406, 439; and cyberspace 151, 152; in the home/ domestic spaces 89, 98, 117, 402, 407–8, 409, 448; in landscapes 65, 101, 102, 105, 106, 133, 143–4, 390, 402; and technology 152, 153, 407, 468
Uncle Josh in a Spooky Hotel (Porter, 1900) 377
Uncle Josh's Nightmare (Porter, 1900) 377
 unconscious, the 32, 73, 76, 134, 136
Underworld (Wiseman, 2003) 139, 395
 United Irish rebellion (1798) 45, 46
 Universal horror/monster films 376, 380, 381–2; *see also under individual film titles*
 Upcott, John 178
 upper classes, decadence of 468, 469
 urban environments 113–14, 132–4, 138; Asian 402, 408, 409; and feelings of isolation 136, 302, 369, 402, 406, 409; *see also urban Gothic*
 urban Gothic 132, 133–4, 135–6, 138; *see also urban environments*
 urbanization 63, 124–5, 132, 371; *see also industrialization*
- Vampire Lovers, The* (1970) 393, fig. 33.1
Vampire: The Masquerade (Rein-Hagen, 1998) 139
Vampire: The Requiem (Marmell *et al.*, 2004) 139
 vampires xlv, 68, 70, 137, 139, 194, 317, 318, 470, 500; and death 494–5; and film 276–7, 279–80, 377, 380, 392–4; and sex/sexual imagery 276, 277, 346, 394, 494, 495; and television programmes 490, 494; and young adult literature 274–5, 276; *see also under individual entries*
Vampyr (Dreyer, 1932) 380
- Vampyres* (Aguirre, 1974) 394
 Vanbrugh, John 18
 Varley, John “Press Enter” (1984) 148–9
 Varma, Devendra *Gothic Flame, The* (1957) 311
 Vasari, Giorgio xxi
 Vauban, Sebastien Le Prestre de 145
 Ventner, Jillian *Gothic Charm School* (2009) 447
 Victorian Gothic xliii; *see also under individual authors*
 Victorine de Chastenay, Mlle *Les mystères d’Udolphé* (1797) 222, 228
 video art 412, 468–9
 videogames 454–6, 460–1; survival horror 458–60, 461; *see also computer games*
 villains 35, 54, 55, 56, 149, 206, 265, 272, 293, 315; and film/television 150–1, 153, 300–1; and stage adaptations 192, 358–9; women as 265, 272, 300–1, 406
 Vinge, Vernor “True Names” (1981) 152
 violence xxxi, 38, 256, 259, 345, 417, 466, fig. 29.2; colonial 66, 69–70; and film/television 74, 378, 384, 396, 494–5; political 205, 237, 333, 361; and videogames 455–6; against women 34, 35, 226, 300, 495; *see also sexual violence*
 viruses *see* diseases; medical metaphors
 Visigoths xxx, 415
 visual arts 323–4, 335, 337; and spectacle/ performance 325, 328, 331; *see also painting; theatrical performances*
 visuality 341–2; *see also imagination*
 Voltaire 441–2; *Paint it Black: A Guide to Gothic Homemaking* (2005) 441, fig. 37.1; *What is Goth?* (2004) 452
 voyeurism 351, 368, 395; *see also freak shows*
- Wales 21–2
 Walpole, Horace 15, 179, 328, 416, 479
Anecdotes of Painting (1762) 88
 architecture/aesthetics, views on 8, 88, 89, 418
Castle of Otranto, The (1764) xxxvi, xlii, 3, 10, 11–12, 52, 53–4, 62, 72, 76, 78, 88, 89, 101–2, 172, 200, 201, 203, 243, 309–10, 329, 419; German translations of 232–3; popularity of

- 159; readers' responses to 180; reviews of 232; stage adaptations of 354
 comparison with William Beckford 89, 95, 96
Description of the Villa, A (1784) 89, 91–2, fig. 8.1
Hieroglyphic Tales (1785) 102
Mysterious Mother, The (1768) 268, 363 and politics 54, 90–1
 Strawberry Hill 10, 15, 53, 88, 89–90, 92, 95–6, 418, 445–6, 479, fig. 8.1
 Walpole, Sir Robert 6, 10, 53
 war and warfare 74, 75, 145, 146, 147, 382; English Civil War (1642–9) 4, 5; eighteenth century Europe 145; First and Second World Wars (1914–18; 1939–45) 74, 136, 381–2; Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) 21, 53, 168; Seven Years War (1756–1763) 224; *see also* military fortifications; revolutions
 War, Jesmyn *Salvage the Bones* (2011) 130
WarGames (Badham, 1983) 147–8
 Warhol, Andy *Electric Chair* (1964) 422–3, fig. 35.3
 Warton, Thomas: *Observations on The Faerie Queen* (1754) 88, 203; *Pleasures of Melancholy* (1747) 87–8
 Weightman, Mary *Friendly Monitor, The* (1791) 245
 Wein, Toni 52, 54
 Weishaupt, Adam *Illuminaten-Orden* (1786/87) 237–8
 Wells, H. G.: *Fate of Homo Sapiens, The* (1939) 134; *Time Machine, The* (1895) 135; *War in the Air, The* (1921) 134; *War of the Worlds, The* (1898) 134
 werewolves 275, 500–1; in film/television 277, 378, 394, 495
 Westerns (films) 124
Wheel, The (Nimibutr, 2002) 401, 402, 404–6
 White, James *Adventures of John of Gaunt, The* (1790) 291–2
Wicker Man, The (Hardy 1973) 388
 Wigglesworth, Michael *Day of Doom, The* (1662) 29
 Wilde, Oscar: *Picture of Dorian Gray, The* (1891) 73, 111; rewrites of 465, 466–9
 wilderness: Australian 65; Canadian 64–5; fear of 28, 33, 64, 123; American 28, 33, 64–5, 123, 124–5; *see also* American frontier; environments; urbanization
 Wilkinson, Sarah Scudgell 188; *Wife of Two Husbands, The* (1803) 271, 272
 Will, Peter 235
 Willich, Anton 235
 Willis, Browne 17, 10
 witches and witchcraft 178, 213, 244, 275, 332, 333; and film 394
Witches, The (Frankel, 1966) 394
Witchfinder General (Reeves, 1968) 394
 “Wolf-King or Little Red-Riding-Hood, The” (*Tales of Terror*, 1801) 285–6, fig. 25.2
 Wollstonecraft, Mary xliii, 29, 35, 55, 315; *Elements of Morality, for the Use of Children* (1790) 248; *Vindication of the Rights of Woman, A* (1792) 34
Woman in Black, The (Mallatratt, 1989) 360–1
Woman in Black, The (Watkins, 2012) 391
Woman in White (Webber, Zippel, Jones, 2004) 357
 women 7, 10, 11; adolescent 275–8; and death 275, 276–8, 279, 281; and film/television 275, 394, 495; and the imprisonment narrative device 268, 271, 272, 358; and reading 164, 173, 174–5, 199–200, 292, 315; as villains 265, 272, 300–1, 406; violence against 34, 35, 226, 300, 495; *see also* female authors; female readers; *and under individual entries*
 women's rights 34–5
 Wood, Ellen *East Lynne* (1861) 264
 Woodrell, Daniel *Winter's Bone* (2006) 130
 Woolf, Virginia *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) 136
 Wordsworth, William 100, 163, 173–4, 310; “Thorn, The” 191
 working classes: and literacy 173; reading habits of 185–6, 187–8
World of Warcraft (1994–) 457
 World Wide Web 150; *see also* internet, the
 Worsely, Giles 18
 Wren, Christopher 18; *Parentalia* (1750) 18–19
 Wright of Derby, Joseph: *Breaking Open the Tomb of His Ancestor* (1772) 328; *Hermit, The* (1769) 326–8; *Philosopher by Lamplight, A* (1769) fig. 28.1
 writing, process of 298–302, 306
 Wynne, Betsey 180

- X-Files, The* (Carter, 1993–2002) 150, 430, 433, 434–5, 487
- YA *see* young adult sector
- young adult sector 274
- Young Frankenstein* (Brooks, 1974) 392
- young readers 179–80, 243–4, 261; of adult literature 246; of chapbooks 185–6, 260; middle class 246, 255; working class 255; *see also* adolescent readers
- Young, Edward *Night Thoughts* (1742–5) 211
- Yovanoff, Brenna *Replacement, The* (2010) 275
- zombies xxv, xxvi–xxvii, 139, 275, 391, 507–8; and computer games 455; and film 139, 395, 506–7; *see also* swarming (as metaphor); *and under individual authors/titles*
- Zschokke, Johann Heinrich:
Abällino der große Bandit (1794) 234; stage adaptations of 234

Taylor & Francis

eBooks

FOR LIBRARIES

ORDER YOUR
FREE 30 DAY
INSTITUTIONAL
TRIAL TODAY!

Over 23,000 eBook titles in the Humanities, Social Sciences, STM and Law from some of the world's leading imprints.

Choose from a range of subject packages or create your own!

Benefits for you

- ▶ Free MARC records
- ▶ COUNTER-compliant usage statistics
- ▶ Flexible purchase and pricing options

Benefits for your user

- ▶ Off-site, anytime access via Athens or referring URL
- ▶ Print or copy pages or chapters
- ▶ Full content search
- ▶ Bookmark, highlight and annotate text
- ▶ Access to thousands of pages of quality research at the click of a button

For more information, pricing enquiries or to order a free trial, contact your local online sales team.

UK and Rest of World: online.sales@tandf.co.uk

US, Canada and Latin America:
e-reference@taylorandfrancis.com

www.ebooksubscriptions.com



Taylor & Francis eBooks
Taylor & Francis Group



A flexible and dynamic resource for teaching, learning and research.